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The politics of self-organisation and the social production of space in urban community gardens

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The Politics of Self-Organisation and the Social Production of Space in Urban Community Gardens

by

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Abstract

Urban community gardens have been characterised as important sites of struggle for urban public space, where radical democratic processes and community-self organisation can emerge and flourish. This thesis contributes to the body of critical literature that examines the social and political potentials of urban agriculture and urban community gardens. Specifically, this research project draws on the idea of the right to the city, first proposed by Henri Lefebvre, to examine how processes of community self-organisation, collective learning, and community narrative creation at the level of the garden relate to social, economic, and political processes at the city-level.

This research draws on two processes of participatory video-making, qualitative interviews, ethnography, auto-ethnography conducted in Seville in the south of Spain between 2015-17. The research project comprised two distinct cycles. The first cycle focuses on two contrasting urban community gardens: Huerto del Rey Moro and Miraflores Sur. The second cycle focuses on a collective of urban gardeners, La Boldina, which emerged from Huerto del Rey Moro in 2017 and now works in sites across the city.

This research finds that some urban community gardens in Seville represent specific concentrations of transformative social and political potential, and that Lefebvre's spatial ontology, which underpins the right to the city, enables us to better characterise the dialectical relationship between the social dynamics within the gardens and their material development. Furthermore, this thesis demonstrates how the processes and approaches developed within urban community gardens can have significant impacts at the city-level.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

> "Urban agriculture is… often an experiment in free activity rather than capitalist labour. Moreover, it has significant potential to work against the alienation of people – from their labour, from other people, from food, from ecological processes, and from urban space – and it very often offers people an opportunity to reappropriate food production, urban ecologies, and urban space" (Purcell & Tyman, 2015: 1139).

> "Social reality is not just coincidentally spatial, existing "in" space, it is presuppositionally and ontologically spatial. There is no unspatialized social reality. There are no aspatial social processes" (Soja, 1996: 46).

> "To claim the right to the city… is to claim some kind of shaping power over the processes of urbanization. Over the ways in which our cities are made and remade, and to do so in a fundamental and radical way" (Harvey 2012: 5).

There is something disarming about urban gardens. Heterogeneous yet familiar, they can be, at once, amongst the most radical and least radical spaces in cities. It can appear at a glance as though productive urban gardens only exist where the city doesn't; in awkward spaces, inaccessible spaces, spaces that haven't yet been developed. But urban gardens are part of the city, in dynamic and shifting relation with all urban processes: the social, the economic, the political, and the ecological. Like all urban spaces, productive urban gardens cannot be considered inherently radical, but only potentially transformative under certain conditions.

I was drawn to the practice of urban agriculture and particularly urban community gardens for their remarkable contrast to the urban built environment. On one hand this contrast is material; growing food in cities represents an alternative to the prevailing conception of cities as sites of consumption rather than production. On the other hand, this contrast is social and economic; productive urban gardeners across Europe grow food for recreation, education, and subsistence, amongst many reasons other than for profit; it is a rare urban garden that measures its successes in terms of efficiency or yield.

It was estimated that in 2011 over a billion people were engaged in urban agriculture around the world (Mougeot, 2015). Urban agriculture comes in many forms and is practiced at many scales; it is an everyday practice with multiple meanings. One of the most widely cited definitions of urban agriculture reflects this diversity:

> "Urban agriculture is an industry located within, or on the fringe of, a town, city or metropolis, which grows and raises, processes and distributes a diversity of food and non-food products (re)using largely human and material resources, found in and around that urban area, and in turn supplying human and material resources,

products and services largely to that urban area" (Mougeot, 2000: 10).

One recent spatial analysis estimated that 456 million hectares of land are cultivated within 20 kilometers of urban centres globally, of which 67 million hectares are cultivated in urban centres themselves (Thebo, Drechsel, & Lambin, 2014). However, urban agriculture comes in many forms, including commercial farms, recreational allotments, subsistence agriculture, and urban community gardens. Each manifestation of urban agriculture has a distinct set of drivers and motivations for uptake. More significantly, each form of urban agriculture has distinct real and potential impacts, for different groups, and at different scales. It is important therefore to explore not only the scope of these impacts – their social and spatial reach – but also the nature and potential depth of change brought about by urban agriculture and urban community gardens.

The academic discourse regarding urban agriculture has grown dramatically in the past two decades. Urban gardens have been associated with a wide range of positive impacts at multiple scales. Gardens have been found to contribute to the health and wellbeing of urban inhabitants (Bellows, Brown, & Smit, 2003), provide ecosystem services (Middle et al 2014; Camps-Calvet et al 2015), foster community building (Carolan & Hale, 2016), and contribute to "actually existing commons" (Eizenberg, 2012). However there is also a growing body of critical literature on urban agriculture (Delind, 2015; McClintock, 2014; McClintock, Mahmoudi, Simpson, & Santos, 2016; Reynolds, 2015; Tornaghi, 2014), which highlights the potentials of urban agriculture to contribute to gentrification and displacement, entrench social inequalities, and reinforce neoliberal ideas regarding entrepreneurialism and individual responsibility.

The past ten years have seen the significant rise of an area of the academic discourse that focuses on the social and political impacts of urban agriculture. Within this field of research, there exists only a very limited amount of literature that focuses on the impacts of urban gardening at the level of the city, beyond the communities involved. Much of the academic literature is focused at the garden- or project-level, exploring the impacts of the gardens on the gardeners and the immediate vicinity. These impacts can be multidimensional, and they can be significant, however they are necessarily limited. This reflects a broader tendency in critical urban social sciences to over-emphasise the local. As Soja (1996: 20) described,

> "[There is] a growing tendency in post-modern critical urban studies to overprivilege the local – the body, the streetscape… the micro-worlds of every day life and intimate communities – at the expense of understanding the city-as-a-whole."

Much of the literature that focuses on the socio-political potentials of urban agriculture also implicitly approaches urban gardens as microcosms of the wider city; places where issues of inequality, inclusion, justice, and democracy are played out in a tangible and observable way.

However, the relationship between urban gardens and the city is far more nuanced, and reciprocal, than research framed at the level of the garden can capture.

This thesis is not concerned with the question of whether or not urban agriculture and urban community gardens have beneficial social impacts within cities, but rather: in what ways and to what extent urban community gardens represent a distinctive set of real and potential socio-political impacts within the city. By framing the question in this way this research hopes to justify not why urban community gardens are a *good* use of scarce, available urban land, but the reasons why, under certain condition, they might be the *best* way of achieving certain outcomes. In order to promote and secure the future of community-led urban gardening projects it is critical that we are able to articulate why a space should be used for an urban garden instead of for meeting other urban needs, for example, for building affordable homes. In order to answer this question, it is important not only to consider the impacts of the gardens on the gardeners, the neighbourhood, and the city, but the extent to which these outcomes differ from other community-led urban land uses; do community gardens represent a distinct and singular pathway to socio-political transformation? And how do the impacts of the gardens at multiple levels – from the individual to the city – intersect and interact?

Some scholars have supported for the radical potential of urban agriculture to challenge the capitalist paradigm, for example by allowing urban inhabitants to "escape" the wage economy (Hodgkinson, 2005), and by generating the material spaces necessary for developing alternative regimes; as Wilson (2012: 734) argues, "[in productive urban gardens] we can begin to see the possibilities for autonomous food spaces where food is both the site and the means for building worlds beyond capitalism." Such experimentation *can* lead to the development of alternative ownership models, such as community land trusts (Thompson, 2015). Urban community gardens have also been characterised as a step towards an alternative property paradigm through collective claims to urban public space (Blomley, 2004). But in order to understand the potential significance of urban agriculture, and the conditions under which these potentials can be realised it important to unpack the 'urban' in urban agriculture.

To this end, this project draws on a primarily Marxist ontology of urbanisation and urban space. Within this framing, the urban can be understood in terms of both global capitalist processes, and micro-level interactions within the city. Neo-Marxists scholars such as David Harvey have argued that the global capitalist system requires surplus product in order to create surplus value for the purposes of capital accumulation and reinvestment; urbanisation and urban development are an inexorable consequence of this logic (Harvey, 2008, 2012). Within the prevailing capitalist system, urban space has become both a key commodity in the global economy, and one of the primary means of absorbing surplus value. Urban centres therefore may be understood as "geographical and social concentrations of surplus product" (Harvey, 2008: 24). Viewed in this way, urbanisation is more than the building of houses, roads and infrastructure within bounded or definable areas. It is the reorientation of land,

resources, the economy, and society itself, towards capitalist modes of production and exchange, leading to the persistent growth of urban centres; a process that Lefebvre (2003) termed, ‘planetary urbanisation’.

Planetary urbanisation has a metabolic relationship with the natural environment. In the Nineteenth Century, Marx’s ‘metabolic rift’ characterised the inevitable uneven development of rural-urban conditions by which the depletion and exhaustion of rural resources, such as soil, mirror the excesses, waste and accumulation of cities. More recently, scholars in the field of urban political ecology have emphasised the relationship between the growth of urban centres and broader socio-ecological processes. Eric Swyngedouw, for example, urges us to understand cities in terms of their continuous de- and re-territorialisation of metabolic circulatory flows (Heynen, Kaika, & Swyngedouw, 2006), thus providing a theoretical foothold beyond the natural-built environment binary. In this way urbanisation can be understood as “a socio-spatial process whose functioning is predicated upon ever longer, often globally structured, socio-ecological metabolic flows that not only fuse together things, natures and peoples, but does so in socially and ecologically and geographically articulated, but depressingly uneven, manners” (Kaika & Swyngedouw, 2014).

This metabolic relationship is fundamentally contradictory, exemplified by unjust agrarian transitions (Fields, 1999), unsustainable and environmentally destructive development, and urban displacement and marginalisation. Political ecologists such as Robert Biel (2012) have argued that capitalism should be understood as a system that both subordinates and “exports disorder” into both the natural environment and society. This disorder has profound social and spatial consequences. As Merrifield writes, “The urbanization of the world is a kind of exteriorization of the inside as well as interiorization of the outside: the urban unfolds into the countryside just as the countryside folds back into the city” (2011: 469).

The last thirty years have seen many of the challenges facing urban inhabitants exacerbated by global neoliberal trends, which have transformed both the global economy and processes of urban governance. Global restructuring, the reconfiguration of the State, and the global liberation of capital, have had dramatic implications on the way that cities are governed and managed; “governance … is being rescaled, policy is being reoriented away from redistribution and toward competition” (Purcell, 2002: 100). These shifts have often manifested as the commodification and the marketisation of both natural and social processes, now widely conceived in terms of natural and social capital. In accordance with the changing role of local government, cities are characterised by the increased involvement of private actors in what was formerly the public sphere, contributing ultimately to a larger and more fluid political arena (Castells, 1998). Within this complex and shifting assemblage of actors and processes, from the global to the local level, urban community gardens can take on a particular significance.

The effect of global political trends and capitalist processes on cities is profound. However,

cities are also constructed, sustained, governed, and managed through sub-national, municipal-level, and micro-level processes. In order to better understand the relationship between urban community gardens, urban space, and urban processes, this research adopts as a lens, Henri Lefebvre's idea of the *right to the city*. The right to the city is a complex, fluid and contested concept. Since its origins in the works of Lefebvre (1968), the right to the city has become a slogan and an ideal, adopted and appropriated by social movements, academics, governments, and non-governmental organisations around the world as a means of articulating the myriad demands that have arisen in response to the prevailing global logic of "accumulation by dispossession" (Harvey, 2004) and the increasing commodification and privatisation of urban space.

The right to the city can be understood as the collective right to democratically control the production and use of urban space and urban processes. Fundamentally it is "an argument for profoundly reworking both the social relations of capitalism and the current structure of liberal-democratic citizenship" (Purcell, 2002: 101). The right to the city is "far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city" (Harvey, 2008: 23). As Lefebvre (1996: 172) states: "the right to the city manifests itself as a superior form of rights: right to freedom, to individualization in socialization, to habitat and to inhabit." The right to the city is underpinned by two fundamental spatial philosophies. The first, informed by Marxist readings of urbanisation, frames cities as the inexorable, spatial consequences of dominating and self-legitimising capitalist processes. The second, Lefebvre's celebrated triad of space, reconstructs urban spatial ontology by understanding space as the dynamic and contested product of both material and social processes.

The right to the city discourse contains a number of concepts, theories, and formulations that make it a useful lens for engaging with urban agriculture and urban community gardens. The right to the city concerns the ways that urban inhabitants self-organise to appropriate urban space. This can occur in countless ways, but urban community gardens are a particularly germane example of the material and spatial manifestation of these processes (Purcell and Tyman, 2015). The right to the city also contains a number of elements that overlap with the existing urban agriculture discourse as well as several central themes that may challenge it.

The aim of this thesis is not to assess whether or not urban community gardens contribute to the realisation of the right to the city. Rather it is to explore the extent to which the assemblage of concepts and formulations contained within the right to the city can help us better understand the real and potential significance of urban community gardens by situating them in a critical ontology of urban space. Specifically, this thesis examines the extent to which the right to the city might enable an understanding of urban gardens that is better integrated with critical conceptions of socio-political and ecological urban processes, as well as being more radically transformative in scope. Furthermore, it explores the extent to which Lefebvre's right to the city enables us to better articulate the relationship between the micro-

level, personal interactions that occur in urban gardens and the broader political and economic trends that produce and define cities and urban space.

In part, this project was conceived in response to the 2015 article by Shannon Tyman and Mark Purcell entitled, “Cultivating food as a right to the city”, which made one of the first attempts to analyse the significance of urban agriculture in terms of Lefebvre’s right to the city. The article argued that urban community gardens can be interpreted in terms of what Lefebvre called *autogestion* (self-management), a precondition to the realisation of the right to the city. However, the article did not sufficiently address or explore the fundamental spatial ontology that underpins the idea of *autogestion* in Lefebvre’s works; it is only because urban space is continuously produced by each urban inhabitant that each urban inhabitant has a right to participate in its governance and management. This research project builds upon the work of Purcell and Tyman, but also aims to demonstrate that understanding the ontology and politics of urban space in the context of urban community gardens is critical for understanding the significance of self-organisation and self-management processes. The title of this thesis, *The Politics of Self Organisation and the Social Production of Space in Urban Community Gardens*, is a testament to the centrality of understanding these two intrinsically related processes.

This thesis explores urban community gardens in Seville through the lens of the right to the city. In Chapters 4 to 7 I examine impacts of and dynamic within urban community gardens using a combination of implicit and explicit ideas, arguments, and formulations contained within Lefebvre’s right to the city. Each of these arguments contributes to answering a central research question of this thesis; in what ways and to what extent can the idea of the right to the city allow us to better understand the socio-political processes, outcomes, and potentials in and around urban community gardens?

In order to explore this question, this project adopts a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach. PAR is a form of inquiry rooted in life-experiences and practice that embraces epistemological plurality, diversity, and difference. It is characterised by a pragmatic, constructivist epistemology, whereby knowledge is acquired “through responding to a real need in life” (Wicks, Reason, & Bradbury, 2008: 19). PAR represents a radical knowledge paradigm that seeks to put citizens, particularly marginalised groups, at the centre of knowledge production, whereby research becomes less about “world-mapping”, and more a process of “world-making” (Gergen & Gergen, 2008). Within this PAR approach to research, this project uses a combination of qualitative, ethnographic, and participatory methods.

A PAR approach was chosen for two reasons. The first is that a participatory approach to research is an effective way of exploring and capturing the ‘messy’, collective, subjective and emotional factors that inherently shape both the material space and the cultures of urban gardens. This approach to research embraces the contradictions that emerge between different modes of inquiry and can more adequately reflect complex and contested processes

within and around urban community gardens than research which is constrained to one discipline or method.

The second reason is that this approach to research resonates with my own social ethos and political outlook. The implicit aim of my academic career is not to contribute exclusively to furthering academic discourse, but rather to produce actionable knowledge that directly contributes towards addressing some of society's most intractable challenges. Additionally, I have a long-standing interest in urban food projects and am committed to supporting urban food initiatives both within and outside of my research. PAR is an approach to research that does not seek objective or universalising solutions, rather it enables me to embrace, and pushes me to reflect upon, my own presuppositions and biases. In essence it allows me to conduct research that, directly and on multiple-levels, contributes to the work and projects of urban gardeners.

This project uses participatory video-making as a core research method. There is a long research tradition of using participatory methods in research around community projects, including in the context of urban community gardens. However participatory video-making is a relatively recent innovation in research, and whilst the critical academic discourse around participatory video has grown considerably in recent years (See for example Milne, Mitchell, & de Lange, 2012), there has not been an attempt to use video-making as a mode of enquiry in urban gardens. In accordance with a PAR approach to research, participatory video-making was not only a useful, epistemologically-diverse way of exploring a complex set of processes around urban gardens, but a tangible way that this research project could contribute to the urban gardening projects through capacity-building and the production of media outputs. In Chapter 8 of this thesis I reflect on the extent to which participatory video-making is a useful way of approaching research in urban community gardens.

The fieldwork for this project takes place in and around Seville in the south of Spain. Seville is unusual in Western Europe for its lack of a large-scale industrial revolution, meaning that much of the urban expansion encroached directly onto agricultural lands. The new developments – characterised by wide avenues and high-rise tower blocks – are spatially distinct from the Old Town (*Casco Antiguo*) where the narrow streets and historic architecture have remained largely unchanged for centuries. There are currently fifteen urban gardens in the city, with a diversity of cultures, growing practices, politics, and institutional arrangements.[1]

Seville was chosen both for the diversity of the urban community gardens, and the ways in which community groups, to different extents and in different ways, self-manage the spaces.

[1] Fifteen urban gardens are recognised by the City Hall in an unpublished report produced across 2015-16. However there also exist a large number of less formalised, less established, or temporary growing spaces that exist on disused private, public, and institutional land that are not recognised in the report.

First contact and field visits were made to six urban gardens in May 2015 as part of a Seed Exchange programme organised by *Red de Semillas Andalucía* – the Andalusian Seed Network – with partners from the UK, France, Italy, and Hungary. During subsequent visits to the city, Miraflores Sur in the north of the city and Huerto del Rey Moro in the Old Town were chosen as case-study sites for their shared but divergent histories and for the interest of the gardeners in a participatory video-making process.

The aim of this research project is to contribute to the urban agriculture discourse by drawing attention to the underexplored politics of space in and around urban community gardens, as well as the distinctive socio-political significance of urban gardens within broader urban processes. I explore the extent to which the right to the city allows us to better understand the relationships between social and spatial processes in and around urban community gardens. My final aim is to draw attention to the potentials of participatory video-making in research, and specifically its potentials for researching community-managed urban food projects.

Structure of the Thesis

Including the Introduction, this thesis comprises nine Chapters. In **Chapter 2**, I critically review the urban agriculture discourse as a way of identifying gaps in the research and the specific contributions of this project to academic discourse. I also introduce the concept of the right to the city, outlining its development and use drawing particularly on the work of Lefebvre but with reference to a number of other academics that have contributed significantly to the concept. I then detail different aspects of the right to the city discourse as well as some of its central concepts; the relationship between capitalism, neoliberalism, and urbanisation; *autogestion*; and Lefebvre's spatial ontology, which constitute this project's implicit theoretical framework. In each case I identify areas of scholarship where these themes have been explored in the context of urban community gardens and the practice of urban agriculture. The aim of this Chapter is not to introduce the full body of literature that this research engages with, but rather to position this thesis with regards to the existing discourse.

In **Chapter 3** I present my methodology. I frame this project as a Participatory Action Research (PAR) process, detailing the form of PAR that it represents and position myself within the PAR discourse. I then describe the specific methods used for data collection and analysis through the research process and detail the two cycles of research that took place across the project. I also explain my selection of case study sites and introduce briefly the Seville context. Finally, I outline some general ethical considerations for the project and some specific considerations that emerged through the participatory video-making process.

Chapter 4 serves two purposes. The first is to introduce Seville's urban community gardens, focusing on the two primary sites of research, giving historical context, including elements of social history that resonate with practices in and around urban community gardens in the city

today. The second purpose of the Chapter is to explore how the social construction of narrative contributes towards the social production of urban community gardens. In this chapter I identify two master narratives, *resistance* and *restoration*, that both reflect and shape the urban gardens as dynamic community-managed spaces.

In **Chapter 5** I consider the impacts of the urban community gardens at different levels within the city. I argue that the single greatest impact can be seen at the neighbourhood level through the creation of public green space that hosts and empowers local residents to participate in collective, democratic processes. I then outline how different forms of challenges ultimately constrain urban gardeners and urban community gardens from realising these potential social-impacts at multiple scales. Finally, I consider the extent to which Seville's urban community gardens might be considered heterotopic spaces and the possibilities this framing opens up for understanding the current and potential significance of community gardens in cities.

In **Chapter 6** I reflect on the processes and politics of self-organisation within and around urban community gardens in Seville. I consider the extent to which these forms of self-organisation could be considered transformative or emancipatory, as well as how they are spatialised, both within the urban gardens and in the wider city. In this Chapter I also introduce the urban permaculture collective, La Boldina, which emerged from one of the urban community gardens and now operates at the city-level. I then discuss the extent to which the idea of the right to the city enables us to better understand the modes of self-organisation observable in and around the urban community gardens.

In **Chapter 7** I consider the ways in which the gardeners and communities that have developed around urban community gardens are developing new ways of learning and engaging with the city through urban agriculture. Specifically, I look at the various ways that the gardens are appropriating elements of permaculture philosophy as a lens for understanding broader urban processes. I consider the opportunities and limitations of this learning.

In **Chapter 8** I reflect critically on the process of this PhD research. Recognising the limitations of participation within this research project and examine the distinct epistemic opportunities and limitations of using participatory video-making in research.

In **Chapter 9** I summarise my conclusions from the research process. First, I consider the transformative potentials of the urban agriculture processes underway in Seville with reference to both their spatial and political potentials within the city. I then reflect on the practical and political limitations of these potentials. Next, I outline the significance of the right to the city in understanding the political, social, and spatial significance of urban community gardens, and the contribution of this framing for the wider urban agriculture discourse. In this Chapter I also discuss the urban policy implications of this research. And in the final section, I

consider areas for further research and research questions that this project has raised but has not been able to address.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The aim of this Chapter is to position this research within the urban agriculture discourse and to illustrate areas of significant overlap with the right to the city discourse. The Chapter uses key themes from the right to the city to outline literature that considers the spatial and political significance of urban agriculture and urban community gardens, drawing on the works of Lefebvre and other scholars. The Chapter is organised around the themes of urbanisation, capital and the natural environment; urban agriculture as spatial practice; and urban agriculture as social practice. In presenting the literature in this way, I aim to demonstrate both the potential significance of the right to the city for better understanding the socio-political significance of urban community gardens, as well as make explicit the gaps in the urban agriculture discourse that this research aims to address.

Urban Agriculture as Discourse: Impacts, Potentials, and Contradictions

There is no single interpretation of the rise to prominence of urban agriculture. Whilst the activity has a long history in cities in the global North and South (Bassett, 1981; Lawsen, 2005; Prain, Karanja, & Lee-smith, 2010), it is now more visible than it has ever been before (Mougeot, 2015). The past three decades have also seen an increased recognition of the potential significance of urban agriculture by politicians, policymakers, community-based organisations, and agencies working at every level (Bakker et al, 2001), as well as an increased focus on the ways in which local policies can influence the outcomes of urban agriculture activities (Mintz & Mcmanus, 2014). In part this recognition represents a reconceptualisation of cities as productive spaces (Colasanti, Hamm, & Litjens, 2012), but it also reflects a further development in a long (albeit fragmented) history of institutional support for urban food production.[2]

The current and potential multi-dimensional significance of urban agriculture is well-documented (See for example Mougeot, 2005; Poulsen et al., 2014; Redwood, 2008; Van Veenhuizen, 2006). There exist substantial bodies of literature outlining the contribution of urban agriculture to the urban environment through, for example, the re-use of grey water (Pinderhughes, 2004), providing ecosystem services (Lin, Philpott, & Jha, 2015), and “closing the nutrient loop” (Mougeot, 2006). Significant research has also established the contribution of urban agriculture to the health of urban inhabitants (Bellows, Brown, & Smit, 2003; Brown

[2] For a critical discussion of legal and institutional frameworks for urban agriculture see Cabannes, Y. (2012). Pro-poor legal and institutional frameworks for urban peri urban agriculture. Rome: FAO.

& Jameton, 2000; Hodgson, Caton-Campbell, & Bailkey, 2011), as well as the therapeutic benefits of urban food growing (O'Brien, 2010).

Many scholars have examined the contribution of urban agriculture to urban food security (such as Hoornweg & Munro-Faure, 2008; Redwood, 2008), and the potential of urban agriculture to feed cities. Some studies have indicated that urban agriculture could play a significant role in feeding cities in the global North (Alaimo et al, 2008), and global South (Zezza & Tasciotti, 2010). However other studies have exposed the difficulty, if not impossibility, of accessing the amount of land required for urban agriculture to make a significant contribution to a city's food demands, such as in Toronto (MacRae et al, 2010).

The last two decades have seen the rise of a discourse which focuses on the social significance and potentials of urban agriculture. On one hand the practice of urban agriculture has been linked closely with community building, particularly for marginalised urban groups (Cabannes & Raposo, 2013; Saldivar-Tanaka & Kransey, 2004; Smit, Bailkey, & Van Veenhuizen, 2006). Urban community gardens have been lauded for their capacity to foster diverse communities (Holland, 2004), engage children and young people in community-oriented projects (Hung, 2004), and for putting women at the centre of decision-making processes (Hovorka, de Zeeuw, & Njenga, 2009; Slater, 2001).

Scholars have also increasingly begun to characterise and explore the subaltern and more radical potentials of the practice of urban agriculture and urban community gardens. Staeheli, Mitchell and Gibson (2002), for example, identify New York's community gardens as the locus of the formation of a "counter-public", whereby marginalised and disenfranchised urban inhabitants discuss, develop and debate alternative visions of public space and property rights. Other scholars have emphasised the potential of urban community gardens as inclusive spaces that invite participation and discussion conducive to radical democratic processes (Shepard, 2009) and the development of 'ecological citizenship' (Travaline & Hunold, 2010). Some scholars have also identified the potential for urban agriculture to be a socially transformative activity, "where political activism and place-making from below find a fertile ground for merging and mutually constituting each other" (Certomà & Tornaghi, 2015: 1124).

However the transformative potential of these spaces should not be over-emphasised or isolated from the broader structural and social context; there is no necessary reason that urban gardens should be transformative spaces (Pudup, 2008). In reality urban community gardens can become inclusionary or exclusionary spaces (Donald & Blay-Palmer, 2006). Critical scholars have recognised the contradictory politics – a "dialectical tension" (McClintock, 2014) – at the heart of urban agriculture (Harris, 2009; Kurtz, 2001). Whilst urban agriculture can be a radical socio-political activity that opens new spaces for participation, enhances citizen claims to public space, and provides new opportunities for engagement in food systems, it can also be a practice that reproduces a Neoliberal agenda,

supporting processes of capital accumulation, displacing citizens, and replacing the distributive functions of the state (cf. McClintock, 2014).

A number of scholars have also identified significant spatial inequalities associated with urban agriculture (Mahbubur, 2014; Wolch, Byrne, & Newell, 2014). Critics point to its contribution to gentrification, arguing that it serves predominantly middle-class interests (Johnston, 2008), and drives a process of 'ecological gentrification', whereby urban inhabitants are displaced, or public spaces replaced, by 'green' spaces as part of an environmental agenda (Dooling, 2009; Quastel, 2009). This is to say that urban agriculture cannot be characterised as innately beneficial, rather, its impacts need to be understood in social and political context and depend on a multitude of other factors.

Much of the research that explores the political and spatial significance and potentials of urban community gardens, both celebratory and critical, focuses on the micro-level impacts of the gardens; those related to the gardeners and spatially proximal community. Exceptions include Baker (2004), who notes the potential for the social and cultural pluralism found in urban community gardens to have both social and spatial implications within the wider city, and Vitiello and Wolf-Powers (2014), who argue that urban agriculture can have both social and economic implications by changing consumption patterns and generating social capital. Overall however, there exists limited research that explores explicitly the potential of urban community gardens to impact politically and socially at the city-level.

There are a number of notable trends in the urban agriculture discourse that it is important to recognise in relation to the North-South divide. The academic literature that explores the political and social potentials of urban agriculture comes overwhelmingly from the global North, particularly Western Europe and North America. In part this reflects the fact that the Northern urban agriculture discourse distinguishes between the practice of urban agriculture and urban community gardens as spaces to a greater extent than urban agriculture discourse concerning the global South.

There exists a plethora of literature on the topic of urban agriculture in the global South from almost every context. However, this literature overwhelmingly emphasises the technical, institutional and developmental dimensions of urban agriculture in relation, for example, to basic needs such as household food security.[3] It is important to note therefore that the discourse to which this research project aims to contribute is distinctly Northern. This is not to preclude the possibility of the development of a more politicised Southern urban agriculture

[3] There do exist a small number of articles concerning the political dimensions of urban agriculture in the global South. See, for example, Shillington, L. J. (2013). Right to food, right to the city: Household urban agriculture, and socionatural metabolism in Managua, Nicaragua. *Geoforum*, *44*, 103–111. However overall the discourse is far narrower than in the anglophone global North. This is in contrast to the rural agriculture political discourse which has been driven by global peasant movements such as Via Campesina and responded to by academics from across the global North and South.

discourse, nor preclude the relevance of Northern urban agriculture and urban community gardens scholarship for the global South. Rather it is to recognise that by engaging with this body of literature, this research project assumes and adopts conceptions of urban agriculture, community, urban space, and the State that are rooted in Northern social, economic and political history, which cannot be separated from the economic dominance and political hegemony of the global North over the global South.

The Right to the City as Discourse

The right to the city is rooted in Marxist philosophy, however today it represents a far broader struggle for social justice in cities. Critical discussions of the right to the city typically begin with Lefebvre's *Le Droit a la Ville* (1968), however substantial development of the concept has occurred elsewhere; through the ways in which Lefebvre's works have been appropriated and reinterpreted by scholars, and more recently by social movements across the global North and South. The heterogeneity of the idea of the right to the city has led to a complex, and in some cases contradictory framework, in which the concept is re-imagined to meet the aims of each specific author or group. The World Charter on the Right to the City, for example, developed by social movements from across the global South, defines the right as follows:

> "The Right to the City is… the equitable usufruct of cities within the principles of sustainability, democracy, equity, and social justice. It is the collective right of the inhabitants of cities, in particular of the vulnerable and marginalized groups, that confers upon them legitimacy of action and organization, based on their uses and customs, with the objective to achieve full exercise of the right to free self-determination and an adequate standard of living" (*World Charter on the Right to the City*, 2005: 2)

It was not until the 1990s, with the translation of Lefebvre's key works, that Anglophone scholars really began to investigate the potential of the right to the city as a response to the increasingly Neoliberal governance of cities, specifically with regards to insurgent citizenship (Holston, 1999; Holston & Appadurai, 1999), democratic citizenship (Isin & Wood, 1999), the increasing role played by civil society in urban development (Sandercock, 1998), and urban spatial justice (Soja, 1996, 2000). The past fifteen years in particular have seen a surge of interest in the right to the city (such as Butler, 2012; Harvey, 2008, Marcuse, 2009; Merrifield, 2011; Purcell, 2002).

Whilst there exists no clear consensus within the right to the city literature, there are a number of common themes that are given varying levels of importance in different contexts; including democracy and citizenship (Purcell, 2003), democratic control of surplus (Harvey, 2008, 2012), and reclaiming public space (Mitchell, 2003). Moreover, the right to the city has

been codified and institutionalised in different contexts with varying degrees of success, which has contributed significantly to the broad understanding of this contested idea.[4] Despite its surge in popularity, the right to the city remains an elusive and problematic concept; difficult to define, and difficult to realise.

Lefebvre's right to the city reorients urban management and decision-making away from State apparatus and towards mobilised urban inhabitants. In doing so Lefebvre imagined a new form of citizenship, beyond the Liberal, Lockean, State-centric conception of rights that underpins the modern global political landscape as well as prevailing conceptions of sovereignty. By contrast, for Lefebvre, rights are a point of departure for individuals and for collectives, rather than entitlements with a State guarantor.

> "Lefebvre does not see rights as liberal democracy does, as codified protections guaranteed by the state. Instead, he imagines rights to be political claims that are made through the action of mobilised groups" (Purcell & Tyman, 2015: 3).

In this way, Lefebvre proposed a radical new paradigm that challenges the prevailing social, political and economic relations of capitalism. Rather than the formalised, state-centric processes of representative democracy and claim-making based upon legal status, the right to the city emboldens mobilised citizens to shape and manage their own modes of production and systems of governance.

This Chapter uses the right to the city framework to explore how urban community gardens have been characterised within the city. It is organised according to some of the key elements of the right to the city discourse: the metabolic relationship between urbanisation, capitalism and the natural environment; the production of urban space; the processes of self-organisation and *autogestion* in urban community gardens; and the idea of collective learning. These themes have been chosen to emphasise the theoretical potentials of the right to the city as a lens for understanding the political and spatial significance of urban agriculture and urban community gardens.

Urbanisation, Neoliberalism, and Urban Agriculture

In many regards, 'the city' is an artificial way of framing a discourse; the debate regarding its use as a unit of socio-political analysis has a long history, and one only has to observe the city to see that it is neither homogenous nor contained. Many scholars have also criticised the

[4] The 2001 Brazilian Federal Law on Urban Development (Law no. 10.257), popularly known as the City Statute, is perhaps the most celebrated piece of legislation to guarantee the right to the city. The Statute guarantees the right to sustainable cities, including the rights to land, housing, infrastructure and services, as well as the right to democratic, participatory administration of urban space (Article 2).

rural-urban binary as an ideological construct. Raymond Williams (1978), for example, argued that the perceived divide was created and sustained through historical class conflict. Feminist scholars in particular have criticised the urban-rural binary as one that reproduces naturalised ideas of hetero-masculinity (production, commerce, waged labour) and femininity (unwaged labour, the home, nature), through a "gendering of spatial difference" (Buckley & Strauss, 2016: 621).

However, it is important to distinguish between the materiality of cities and 'the urban' as a socio-economic and political construct. As Harvey writes, "The clear distinction that once existed between the urban and the rural [is] gradually fading into a set of porous spaces of uneven geographical development under the hegemonic command of capital and the state" (2012: 19).

Adam Smith understood urbanisation as a necessary process within a productive economy; cities were well suited specifically to the development of a manufacturing sector. Thomas Malthus developed a model linking the process of urbanisation to the agricultural economy, population growth and demographic shifts. However it was Max Weber that first made the connection between the political power of 'the urban' and the development of cities; "The city, through politics, exercises authority and domination over an urban territory" (Fields, 1999: 104).

David Harvey interprets large scale, state-managed urban development projects, such as Georges-Eugene Haussmann's rebuilding of Second Empire Paris from 1853-1870, and Robert Moses' redevelopment of New York in the 1940s primarily as political-economic interventions, designed to solve the simultaneous crises of unemployment and surplus capital by, "transforming the scale at which the urban process was imagined" (Harvey, 2008: 27). This process of debt-funded infrastructure development fuelled post-war economic development in the global North, and from the early 2000s, has been central to the growth of the BRIC[5] and MINT[6] economies. Whilst it is beyond the scope of this review to give a full account of the ways in which the relationship between urbanisation and capitalism has been characterised, it is important to note that even in the context of national specificity and regional developmental trends, there remains a close interrelation between capitalist restructuring and uneven urban development.

The last forty years have seen the relationship between urbanisation and capitalism reconfigured, and in many instances made closer, by global neoliberal trends. Neoliberalism emerged from a resurgence of *laissez-faire* economic liberalism in the late Twentieth Century. However, it is important to understand neoliberalism, not solely as an economic theory, but as a political one, which has substantially altered the character of urban governance. Economic and urban development policies enacted by local government increasingly reflect the fact that

[5] Brazil, Russia, India, and China
[6] Mexico, Indonesia, Nigeria, and Turkey

local contexts are positioned within a global economy, rather than existing as distinct aspects of a national economy. Accordingly, local governments have increasingly oriented policies towards gaining a competitive advantage (Peck, 1998). Such competitive individualism is evident in new managerial approaches to public institutions, and a culture of measurement, almost exclusively in terms of a form of cost-benefit analysis that is analogous to market mechanisms (Sen, 2000). Other Neoliberal trends include market liberalisation, the pre-eminence of individual private property, and the rolling back of State apparatus.

To a great extent these trends have exacerbated the challenges facing urban community-led projects and increased competition for urban land. Urban gardens across the global North and South are routinely threatened by neoliberal urban development policies, ensuring that community managed gardens in particular remain permanently contested spaces in a perpetual state of insecurity, at risk of displacement or closure (Saed, 2012). The typically precarious situation means that they often serve as spaces for short to medium term social and political experimentation, for emerging initiatives and ideas. As Tornaghi (2014: 15) argues,

> "For its ability to reconnect the sphere of reproduction to its ecological and physical substrate, [urban agriculture] opens important windows of opportunity for experimenting with radical mechanisms of territorial development and urban living."

In Western Europe there is a long, uneven history of institutional support for urban community gardens (Bassett, 1981). In the UK, for example, the history of urban allotments dates back to the Nineteenth Century. Allotment sites have largely withstood competition for urban land for development through a combination of legislative protection and citizen mobilisation (Crouch & Ward, 1998; Poole, 2006). Similarly Ebenezer Howard's vision of the productive 'garden city' (Howard, 2009 [1898]) has remained on both mainstream political and radical activist agendas since the Nineteenth Century (Duany, 2011; Ross & Cabannes, 2015).

Overall however urban community gardens are frequently 'at odds', spatially and politically, with prevailing, neoliberal urban development models (Schmelzkopf, 2002; Zavisca, 2003). Biel (2016) argues that urban agriculture can be significant for addressing the impacts of the capitalist system within cities, particularly at the social level, but that it has been held back from realising its potentials as it is frequently "repressed/excluded, [or] contained within parameters where it serves the ruling order" (Ibid: 92-3).

There exists a significant body of critical literature identifying the limitations of urban agriculture for escaping or operating beyond neoliberalism (such as Guthman, 2008; Holt-Giménez, 2010). Ghose and Pettygrove (2014) argue that in the USA, urban community gardens simultaneously contest and reinforce neoliberal practices, whilst Ernwein (2017) argues that urban agriculture simultaneously contests the neoliberalisation of space and implements neoliberal governmentality. Overall, within the urban agriculture discourse, the

relationship between urban agriculture and neoliberalism has not been sufficiently distinguished from the relationship between urban agriculture and socio-ecological metabolic flows under capitalism.

Only a handful of scholars have examined the significance urban agriculture from a Marxist political economy perspective, that is, in terms of the ways that urban agriculture can disrupt, challenge or reinforce the dynamic relationship between metabolic flows, capital and urbanisation. Sbicca (2014) argues that whilst urban agriculture can contribute towards mending the metabolic rift at the local or city scale, the embeddedness of any such activity within the broader Neoliberal political-economic context often complicates or blunts its transformative potential. House and Figueroa (2015) have argued that urban agriculture represents not only a significant pathway to food sovereignty, but also to an alternative life beyond capitalism. Classens (2015) meanwhile has argued that unpacking the "co-constitutive character of nature and society" is critical for understanding the socio-political potentials of urban community gardens beyond capitalism. Finally, some scholars have suggested that urban community gardens offer proof that "economies based on free-cooperation and solidarity are possible" (Rosol & Schweizer, 2012: 721).

This research project attempts to build on this limited area of research by examining the significance of urban community gardens in Seville in the context of the wider city, understood critically as a socio-economic and ecological construct. The focus of this project is upon the spatial and social impacts of the urban gardens**,** drawing significantly on the ways in which urban ecological processes both shape and are shaped by social and political processes at the neighbourhood- and city- levels. My aim is to contribute to the burgeoning political discourse regarding urban agriculture in a way that re-emphasises the significance of urban community gardens for challenging and transforming fundamental dynamics of capitalist urban development, rather than as a specific response to the more recent neoliberalisation of cities.

Urban Agriculture as a Spatial Practice

> "Space is now becoming the principle stake of goal-directed actions and struggles. It has of course always been the reservoir of resources, and the medium in which strategies are applied, but it has now become something more than the theatre, the disinterested stage or setting, of action. Space does not eliminate the other materials or resources that play a part in the socio-political arena… Rather it brings them all together and then in a sense substitutes itself for each factor separately by enveloping it" (Lefebvre, 1991: 410).

That urban agriculture is a spatial practice is self-evident. All urban activities are spatialised within the city. One way of understanding urban agriculture spatially is by analysing how its

practice and its impacts are distributed. Some scholars have found, for example, that certain forms of urban agriculture do not benefit marginalised communities (Bohm, 2016), and instead contribute to spatial inequality within cities. However, by taking a more critical approach to the subject of space, our understanding of the current and potential socio-political significance of urban agriculture, and particularly urban community gardens, becomes deeper and more nuanced. To this end, Lefebvre's conception of space is particularly important.

The ontology of space has always been contested. The earliest theoretical developments occurred through particular philosophical and mathematical paradigm shifts. Cartesian logic posed space as an abstract; an absolute which contained all other bodies. By contrast 20th century thinkers such as Derrida and Barthes came to characterise space as a mental realm which "envelope[d] social and physical" conceptions of space (Lefebvre, 1991:5).

Perhaps Lefebvre's most celebrated contribution to academic discourse was his analysis of space as simultaneously a material, mental and social construct. This spatial ontology draws on the philosophy of Nietzsche, Hegel and Heidegger, amongst others, and critically underpins Lefebvre's predominantly historical materialist interpretation of urbanisation. His theory, laid out in *The Production of Space* (1991 [1974]) has been explored in depth by both urbanists (such as Castells, 1983; Gottdiener, 1985, 1993) and geographers (such as Moles, 2008; Sheppard, 2002).

Lefebvre's theory of space is "primarily an *ontological* intervention, exploring the multifaceted materiality of space as an object" (Pierce & Martin, 2015: 1280); space is understood to be socially constituted through the co-existence and interrelation of three 'spheres', which he termed *spatial practice*, *representation of space*, and *spaces of representation* (Lefebvre, 1991), commonly referred to as *perceived* space, *conceived* space, and *lived* space. This triad constitutes three "moments" (Ibid: 40) of social space.

Perceived space refers to the material space that constitutes the built and natural environments; it is the material arena in which day-to-day actions occur. There exists a growing body of literature detailing the materiality of urban agriculture, for example around the issue of land accessibility (Cohen & Reynolds, 2014; Debolini et al, 2015). *Conceived* space refers to the psycho-social construction of space, the knowledge this entails and the ways that space is represented. Conceived space is the realm of traditional urban planners, whereby space is rationalised. *Lived* space combines both perceived and conceived space; it is each individual's experience with space in everyday life. Lived space is a constituent of social relations and thus, social life (Purcell, 2002). As Merrifield (2011: 475) writes,

> "It's not in space that people act: *people become space by acting*. Nothing is scenic anymore… participants' own bodies become the major scenic element, the spatial form as well as the spatial content."

Lefebvre also distinguishes between *dominated spaces;* spaces transformed by the vision of individuals, technology and practice; and *appropriated* spaces; spaces transformed through the labour and practices of a group, for the group. Appropriated spaces are the basis for Lefebvre's idea of the city as *oeuvre* (a body of work); a dynamic and collective construct, often contrasted with the city as 'product' or 'commodity'. The idea of the *oeuvre* emphasises use- over exchange-value. Rather than being a binary distinction – spaces are neither wholly one nor another – the dialectical tension between dominated and appropriated space characterises the continuous, lived struggle of all urban actors to enact and embody their visions of the city. Neither is a permanent state, spaces become layered through subsequent acts of domination and appropriation that inform the lived experience of space through memory.

In the context of the rapid privatisation of urban space, there has been a resurgence of interest in two areas that overlap closely with Lefebvre's notion of space, the ideas of 'the commons', and public space (Low & Smith, 2005; Mitchell, 2003). Public space is particularly significant as a place for excluded inhabitants (Brown, 2006), as well as for mobilisation, debate, and for the claiming and exercise of democratic rights. Public space is both the product of social relations and an expression of the power-relationships therein (Mitchell, 2003). It should therefore be understood as both a spatial and relational construct. Similarly, the idea of a commons can be understood as both a construct and a process. As Harvey writes,

> "The common is … an unstable and unmalleable social relation between a particular self-defined social group and those aspects of its actually existing or yet to be created social and/or physical environment deemed crucial to its life and livelihood. There is, in effect, a social practice of *commoning.*" (Harvey, 2012: 73).

Discussion of the ways in which groups lay claim to public space through agriculture inevitably overlaps with 'the commons' discourse, particularly as it relates to cities in the global North through grassroots participation (Tornaghi, 2012) and resistance to processes of enclosure (Bradley, 2009). In her systematic analysis, Eizenberg (2012) makes the case for community gardens in New York as an "actually existing commons", interpreted in terms of Lefebvre's triad of space. She argues that urban gardens are, "a contested arena of opposites, ambiguities, and as a paradigmatic site for the examination of struggles over space and the spatially embedded potentialities for social change" (Eizenberg, 2012: 771).

Lefebvre's conception of space cannot be separated from his political-economic philosophy. For this reason, it should be understood as an important extension of Marxist thought, particularly as it relates to both the spatialisation of capital flows and resultant urbanisation, and the ways that urban processes produce both use and exchange value. It represents simultaneously one of the most promising and problematic theorisations within Lefebvre's body of work, particularly as it contrasts with the substantial, parallel bodies of literature

exploring *place* as a relational construct, and the process of place-making (Pierce & Martin, 2015)

Finally, the practice of guerilla gardening has received much attention within both academic and activist circles (for example, Tracey, 2007). Guerilla gardening has often been characterised as a radical, insurgent practice, allowing people to contribute to the production of the city (Hou, 2010) and perceived as an act of resistance that can "open up unexpected and non-normative possibilities for conceptualising sustainability" (Crane, Viswanathan, & Whitelaw, 2012: 71). However it has also been argued that the impact of guerilla gardening as a radical political act has been overstated (Adams & Hardman, 2013).

Tornaghi (2014) has called for a more critical geography of urban agriculture that acts in continuity with scholars such as Lefebvre on the social production of space. However in spite of a growing recognition that "the spatial framing cannot be separated from the social framing of [urban agriculture] projects, as both are thought of together" (Ernwein, 2014: 78), there has not been a significant shift in the urban agriculture discourse.

In spite of a growing recognition that urban gardens are shaped materially by social processes, such as conflict and deliberation (Aptekar, 2015), there is a lack of research that operationalises Lefebvre's spatial ontology as analytical categories in the context of urban community gardens, (with the important exception of Eizenberg (2012), as described above). This remains a significant gap in the research, not only in terms of developing an approach to scholarship that embraces the social production of space in the context of urban agriculture, but in exploring the potentials of Lefebvre's spatial triad as an analytical framework and methodology.

Urban Agriculture as a Self-Managed Social Practice

> "Autogestion is a concrete practice of revolutionary struggle for an economy beyond capitalism" (Purcell & Tyman, 2015: 1136).

Lefebvre's right to the city emerges from his conception of urban space but is only meaningful in the context of his idea of *autogestion*. *Autogestion* is frequently translated as 'self-management', but in the works of Lefebvre, implies a political process. Marx used the notion of *autogestion* to refer to the subversive ways in which the proletariat in factories might self-organise to self-manage production. But this idea was more broadly framed by Libertarian thinkers, including Lefebvre, who relate it more closely to ideas of autonomy, and the self-governance of society more broadly. For Lefebvre, *autogestion* was an imperative. It is the way in which urban inhabitants might self-organise to participate in the production and management of the city through the appropriation of spaces, resources, products, and

systems. It is a perpetual process; "*Autogestion* far from being established once and for all, is itself the site and stake of struggle" (Lefebvre: 2001: 779).

The idea of *autogestion* is closely associated with Lefebvre, however the idea has a long history in Leftist thought for both communist and anarchist thinkers. Like the right to the city, *autogestion* has been appropriated by different theorist, actors, and social movements in diverse contexts. In some contexts *autogestion* has been closely aligned with workers control (see for example Rossanvallon, 1976, cited in Brenner, 2001). While Marx's political thought has become synonymous with worker's control of the modes of production, in his early writings the aims of autogestion were more broadly applied to society. In, *On the Jewish Question* (1844), Marx describes a process through which all citizens would increasingly take control of their own governance and the State would "wither away", thus imagining a more decentralised and non-State-centric form of self-management than that which came to be associated with communism.

For this reason, and for some thinkers, the idea of *autogestion* is more closely aligned with an anarchist articulation of *autonomy*, which advocates for governance and institutions outside of the State apparatus. The idea of *autogestion* has a particularly close and important relationship with late Nineteenth Century and early Twentieth Century anarchist thought, which emphasised federated systems of governance beyond the State as well as principles of mutual aid, free agreements, and self-jurisdiction.[7]

In France, Castoriadis was instrumental in bridging these conceptions of *autogestion*, as well as for bringing the idea to a public audience through his 1950-60s journal, *Socialisme ou Barbarie*. Like Lefebvre, Castoriadis' conception of *autogestion* formed from his critique of the communist State. He proposed an alternative, socialist model of a decentralised system of workers councils' self-management; the aim being the socialisation of decision-making (Castoriadis, 2005 [1975]). Eventually, Castoriadis came to argue that Marxism was the enemy of self-management (Coatsey, 2017).

This is to say that whilst the idea of *autogestion* is contested, both within and outside of the works of Lefebvre the concept not only incorporates issues of self-management, but also self-organisation and self-governance. What is significant about Lefebvre's contribution to the discourse was to frame *autogestion* not as a political argument, but as a methodology; as an opportunity and imperative for all urban inhabitants to realise their right to the city. I return to the subject of *autogestion* in Chapter 6.

[7] One of the leading thinkers in this area was Peter Kropotkin. For more information on his philosophy of mutual aid see Kropotkin, P. (1976) Mutual aid. Boston: Porter and Sargent Publishers, Inc.. For more information on his notion of self-jurisdiction see Kropotkin, P. (1975) 'Modern science and anarchism' and 'Anarchism, law and authority', in E. Capouya and K. Tompkins (eds.) The essential Kropotkin. New York, NY: Liveright Publishers.

There exists a narrow band of academic literature that brings together the themes of *autogestion* with the practice of urban agriculture. As previously described, Purcell and Tyman (2015) make the most explicit argument for interpreting urban agriculture conceptually. They emphasise the concept of *spatial autogestion*, the production of spaces in which urban inhabitants will encounter one another; spaces that can be appropriated and collectively defined by these interactions. For this reason Purcell and Tyman (2015: 1144) argue that urban community gardens can be interpreted as a partial "activation" of the forms of *autogestion* described by Lefebvre:

> "This activation was certainly partial: not every inhabitant became active. And inhabitants' spatial autogestion was also partial. They did not create a city in which urban space was entirely produced and managed by inhabitants, without the state and capitalism. Yet in both cases, inhabitants did become active and they did achieve a considerable measure of spatial autogestion."

Certomà and Tornaghi have argued that whilst in the context of urban agriculture "the idea and the practice of "autogestion" is clearly confronted by issues of scale" (2015: 1127), the concept can be enhanced by appealing to other, related concepts that characterise the food sovereignty discourse such as food justice (Alkon & Agyeman, 2011; Alkon & Mares, 2012; Holt-Giménez & Wang, 2011), and urban commoning (Biel, 2016; Stavrides, 2015). Elsewhere there exists a vast amount of literature that engages with the idea of 'self-management', however these examples do not reflect Lefebvre's political intention, referring to more practical, programmatic issues, such as capacity building (Bailkey et al, 2007),

Beyond the elements of the urban agriculture discourse that explicitly invoke ideas of self-organisation and self-management, there exists a vast amount of literature exploring social elements of urban agriculture and urban community gardens that is relevant to the right to the city discourse. The potentials of urban agriculture for community building, for example, have been explored at length. Some scholars have identified the potential of urban agriculture to contribute to the "civic health" of a community (Tieg et al, 2009), whilst others have argued that urban agriculture can contribute towards deepening "food democracy" (McIvor & Hale, 2015). However this much of this literature doesn't unpack critically the dynamics and politics of the community-building process, nor the significance of these processes at the city-level.

Beyond the urban agriculture discourse there are several distinct bodies of literature that bring together the ideas of food systems, self-organisation, and self-management. One significant area of overlap between the idea of self-management and food systems comes from the food sovereignty movement. Food sovereignty is the right of people to define their own food and agricultural systems (Declaration of Nyéléni, 2007), including where the food comes from, how it is produced, and by whom. The food sovereignty movement is a challenge to the prevailing global food system, offering a radical alternative paradigm that seeks to put food producers at the centre of decisions on food policy at the local, national and

global levels. Food sovereignty can be interpreted as a reaction to the contemporaneous processes of the commodification of land, food and labour (Polanyi, 2001), and the 'ecological crisis of capitalism' (O'Connor, 1998) arising from Marx's 'Metabolic Rift' (Wittman, 2009).

Within the food sovereignty discourse the idea of autonomy is used in two main ways. The first is in the context of self-determination. The food sovereignty movement grew out of peasants' as well as indigenous peoples' struggles for autonomy and self-determination (Pimbert, 2008). The second is in terms of autonomy from and within markets. This is largely a strategic use of the idea of autonomy:

> "Food sovereignty requires both efforts to re-direct state powers and to carve autonomy from them, both a tactical engagement with markets and spaces of autonomy from market logics" (Shattuck et al., 2015: 430).

The idea of food sovereignty overlaps significantly with the idea of the right to the city. However there is limited engagement between the food sovereignty movement and urban producer groups, especially in Europe. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to explore the relationships and opportunities for drawing on both concepts,[8] however it is important to recognise that ideas of autonomy and self-management are being developed and actioned outside of the Marxist-Libertarian discourse to which Lefebvre belonged.

Elsewhere complexity theorists have described the process through which new and unpredictable properties, most notably self-organisation, can emerge from within complex systems. In the context of urban food systems Biel (2016) has argued that we can achieve disalienation from food systems, from modes of production, and from community by embracing properties emerging from complex systems; by "bringing society and nature together on parallel organising principles: those of self- organisation" (Ibid: 8). Some anarchist geographers such as Simon Springer (2013) have used the ideas and processes set out in complexity theory to augment anarchist conceptions of horizontalism and self-management, however these ideas have not been explored in the context of urban agriculture. Significantly also, there has yet to be any research that explicitly considers the relationships between self-organisation as a property of complex systems and the idea of *autogestion* as described by Lefebvre or Castoriadis.

A final area of significant overlap between the ideas of self-organisation and urban food systems is the burgeoning discourse around urban alternative food networks. These networks

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[8] To date, the only piece of research that explicitly draws on both the right to the city and the idea of food sovereignty in the context of urban agriculture is Passidomo, C. (2013). *Right to (Feed) the City: Race, Food Sovereignty, and Food Justice Activism in Post-Hurricane Katrina New Orleans*. University of Georgia.

characterised by ‘local food’ initiatives and short value chains have arisen in cities across North America and Western Europe, although the current discourse focuses predominantly on cases from North America. These politically-engaged networks have arisen for a diversity of reasons, but often represent a mode of resistance against the corporate food regime (Cockrall-King, 2012; Jarosz, 2008), and the desire to reconnect consumers with agriculture and food production (Kneafsey et al., 2008; Lyson, 2004). Unlike the food sovereignty movement, alternative food networks are typically driven by groups of urban consumers. In the context of alternative food networks literature from the USA, particular attention has been paid to urban agriculture and its significance for race and identity based struggles (Alkon & Agyeman, 2011), for contesting the neoliberal paradigm (Alkon & Mares, 2012), and for creating more socially-just, local food systems (Allen, 2010).

Each of these areas of research and practice contribute significantly to our understanding of the processes of autogestion, self-organisation, and autonomy. However, their potentials for deepening our understanding of urban agriculture remain under-explored. This research project recognises the important academic contributions of scholars on issues of autonomy, food sovereignty, and alternative food networks. However, there are two reasons that the following analytical Chapters focus on the issue of *autogestion* as a way of characterising self-management, and social-organisation practices.

The first is that the relationship between *autogestion* and Lefebvre’s spatial ontology are well articulated in his writings. The potential consonance between the right to the city, food sovereignty, and food justice discourses is beyond the scope of this project but represents an important area for further research. The second reason relates to the specificity of the Seville case study. The groups that I engaged share aims and a language with the idea of *autogestion* and the right to the city to a greater extent than with concepts of food sovereignty and alternative food networks. I return to this issue in Chapters 8 and 9.

In summary the area of the urban agriculture discourse that considers the social and political impacts of urban gardens is growing but does not engage sufficiently with the spatiality of urban agriculture. There is also a paucity of literature that looks beyond the level of the project or community to the level of the city. The right to the city discourse does not present a unified or necessarily coherent conceptual framework. However, the assemblage of concepts contained within the right to the city, those both explicitly expounded by Lefebvre and explored in other areas of academic discourse, are a useful way of characterising and exploring these under-researched real and potential impacts of urban community gardens. In particular, Lefebvre’s spatial ontology, as well as the significance of *autogestion* enable us to relate the interactions and processes observable within and around urban community gardens, to the level of the city, by engaging critically with the ‘urban’ in urban agriculture.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This Chapter outlines the methodology and methods used in this research process. I use the term *methodology* to refer to a distinct disciplinary and/or epistemological approach to research and knowledge production. The term *method* refers to specific tools or processes that are used to gather, analyse and disseminate data. In part this research project intends to explore how 'crossing' specific methodologies, and combining methods, can open up new spaces for knowledge production and a productive epistemological plurality.

This project attempts to combine a range of modes of investigation in research whilst reflecting critically on the methods they entail. In doing so it seeks to contribute to the development of innovative tools and methods for future participatory action research around urban community food groups, and for participatory research with community-based organisations more broadly. This reflective approach is best understood as a series of overlapping cycles of planning-action-reflection, at multiple scales, using multiple modes of inquiry.

This Chapter will position this research project within broader methodological discourses. It outlines key methodological and disciplinary concepts that have informed the development of the project and how the 'dialogue' between theory and practice operates in the form of iterative cycles of inquiry throughout the project. It then outlines how and why specific approaches were used in this research with reference to the project's theoretical framework and details the specific methods that were used to collect, analyse and disseminate data.

Participatory Action Research

> "If you want to truly understand something, try to change it" (Kurt Lewin, attributed).

Each of the methodological approaches and methods employed in this research project are positioned within an overarching framework of Participatory Action Research (PAR). PAR seeks to understand and improve the world by changing it (Baum, MacDougall, & Smith, 2006). It is distinct from other approaches to research in that it explicitly aims to develop knowledge *for action*; recognises and values experiential, non-academic learning; and consciously contests traditional hierarchies of knowledge production (Fine, Tuck, & Zeller-Berkman, 2007).

PAR is a collaborative process of research, education and action specifically oriented towards social transformation (Kindon, Pain, & Kesby, 2007). It is a reflective and critical approach to research that embraces the subjectivities, the personal, and the politics of knowledge

production. As such, PAR challenges the fact-value binary – the "false objectivism of positivist science" (Swantz, 2008: 32) – that some scholars argue is responsible for "perpetuating and reinforcing social injustices and inequalities" (Wicks et al., 2008: 19) around the world. *Transformation* is a particularly important theme within PAR. Its potentials have been explored in terms of individual "transformations of being" (Heron & Lahood, 2013: 444), collective and organisational transformation (Torbert & Taylor, 2013), and structural transformation or "liberation" (Brinton Lykes & Mallona, 2013).

At the heart of PAR is the dynamic relationship between theory and practice. With this dynamic arrangement come specific epistemological challenges as well as opportunities. Within a PAR approach, a participant-researcher often develops an inductive and adaptive theoretical framework that is responsive to the knowledge and 'data' gained through practice, and through engaging iterative cycles of inquiry. This creates challenges for the researcher when it comes to extrapolating from their experience or creating generalities. As Gustavsen, Hansson and Qvale (2008: 63) argue:

> "If action research is seen as social constructions made jointly between research and other actors, we cannot remove the active participation of research after 'the first case' and let theory speak alone. Instead the need is for a process of social construction that can, in itself, encompass the challenge of reaching out in scope."

Such an approach emphasises the importance of horizontal network-building, convergence, and solidarity between various groups affected or impacted by specific themes or interests.

Advocates of PAR typically focus their critique of the 'traditional, mainstream' research paradigm on the power relationships inherent in the researcher-subject dynamic and the monopolies of knowledge production enjoyed by academics. Within a PAR framework, power, knowledge and identity are also all contested, and so a typical characteristic of PAR is a critical analysis of power and privilege within the research process (Brydon-Miller, 2008). PAR attempts to enable people to empower themselves through construction of their own knowledge, on their own terms. The co-production of knowledge with and for citizen groups recognises the need for *participation* and *voice* in order to bring about positive social change. However within a PAR framework the form, process and spaces for participation need to be carefully negotiated and managed (Gaventa & Cornwall, 2008), lest the research reproduce, or even legitimise, hidden inequalities and dynamics within groups and communities (Cooke & Kothari, 2001).

PAR also draws on numerous academic and non-academic philosophies, including but not limited to Paolo Freire's *critical pedagogy* (1996 [1968]), Linda Tuhiwai Smith's *Decolonising methodologies* (2012), Citizen Science (Irwin, 2002; Pandya, 2012), critical theory (Brookfield, 2006; Kemmis, 2008), the emerging field of public geographies (Fuller, 2008; Hawkins et al., 2011), and the broader academic recognition of the significance of transdisciplinary research.

Within this overarching framework of Participatory Action Research, this project draws primarily on two distinct methodological traditions: qualitative research and participatory visual research.

There are two primary reasons why this project uses a Participatory Action Research approach. The first it that, as discussed in the introduction, research exploring Marxist or historical materialist trends is often abstracted from the lived reality of urban inhabitants. This lived reality was at the centre of Lefebvre's thought regarding the construction of the urban, and yet cannot be characterised or understood in purely macro-economic or –political terms. The second reason is that urban community gardens are often the sites of micro-level social and political struggles, conflicts, and contradictions, as explored in Chapter 2. A PAR approach allows me to position myself within the communities struggling for urban space in a way that not only enables potentially more incisive research, but also resonates with my political and ethical interests as a social activist as well as a researcher. In particular, a PAR process allows these two elements to complement rather than constrain one another.

In accordance with the PAR tradition, this research entailed two cycles of research, each of which had a distinct set of research questions, scope, and focus, as detailed below. Beyond their distinct but complementary contributions to the overall purpose of this thesis – to examine how the right to the city can enable us to better understand the socio-political potentials of urban community gardens – the two cycles share a methodological approach. Specifically, each cycle was constructed around a central research process of participatory video-making.

Cycles of Inquiry

This thesis draws on twenty-five weeks of fieldwork conducted in Seville between April 2015 – June 2017. Whilst each of the two cycles utilised a similar methodology, and some participants contributed to both research cycles, there are significant differences between the cycles, both in terms of research themes and scope.

The first cycle comprised: the first period of fieldwork, a scoping visit to Seville in June 2015; the first participatory video process conducted during the second period of fieldwork from April-June 2016; and the third period of fieldwork which took place from September to October 2016; two interviews conducted during the fourth period of fieldwork April 2017 that were follow up interviews with gardeners to explore themes critical to the first cycle.

The primary purpose of the scoping trip was to identify sites for fieldwork and to start to build relationships with individuals and organisations in the city. As such I did not use any formal research methods, and no material from the informal, initial conversations that I had with gardeners is included in this thesis. However, it is important to include it here as my initial

impressions and contact with the gardeners certainly influenced the planning of the second period of fieldwork, as well as this project's overall theoretical and methodological development.

The second cycle comprises the fourth period of fieldwork which took place from April to June in 2017 as well as my ongoing contact with the gardeners. Specifically, this second cycle draws on work conducted with the gardeners both within the fourth period of fieldwork and through my further remote engagement with some of the gardeners until October 2017. Figure 1, below, summarises the two research cycles.

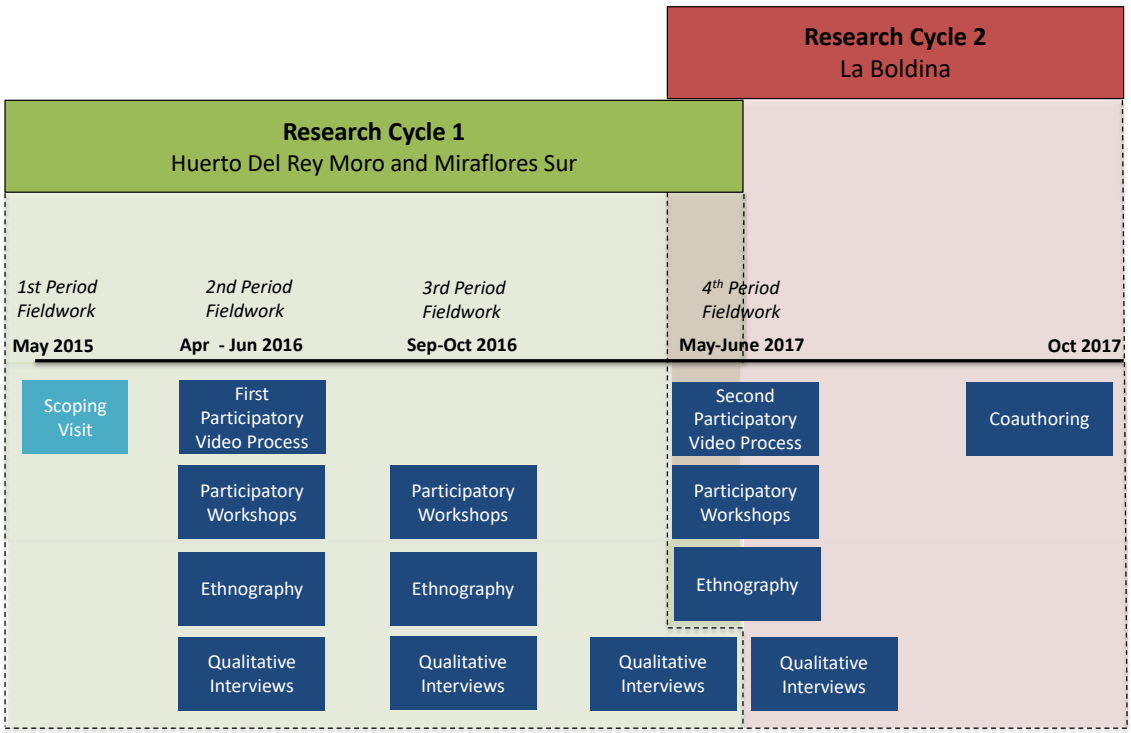

Figure 1. *Summary of research cycles and methods*

The two research cycles are distinguished not only by their separate participatory video processes but also by the scale at which they occurred, and the actors involved in each cycle. My initial aim was to use three cycles of research, however the nature of my third period of fieldwork in autumn 2016, was not sufficiently distinct from the second period of fieldwork to warrant inclusion as a separate cycle. Rather the third period of fieldwork was useful for deepening my understanding of issues that had been raised in the second period of fieldwork. The fourth and final period of fieldwork included one week of research included two follow-up interviews of relevance to the first cycle (as described above). This was predominantly a small number of qualitative interviews with individuals, regarding issues identified in the first

cycle, that were not available during my third period of fieldwork. The majority of my fourth and final period of fieldwork was dedicated to the second cycle of research.

It is important to note that, at the time of writing, my engagement with the gardeners is ongoing. My aim is to return to Seville to continue working with one group of urban gardeners in particular. This continued engagement is outside of the scope of this thesis, relating mainly to potential, future activities, including the dissemination of elements of this thesis. However, it is important to recognise that our ongoing dialogue about this research will have undoubtedly, inadvertently influenced my analytical and writing processes in ways that are challenging to fully account for. This should be not considered a flaw in the project's methodology, rather it reflects the dynamic and cyclical nature of participatory action research and the relationship-building it enables, which do not fit 'neatly' within PhD project timeframes. In Chapter 8 I reflect more critically on the ways that the cycles of research, and periods of fieldwork, influenced the direction of this research project.

Table 1, below, summarises the time period and research methods used within each research cycle. The figure below provides further detail on the way that these methods were spread across the four periods of fieldwork.

	First Cycle	Second Cycle
Cycle Period	April-2015 – April 2017	April 2017 – October 2017
Fieldwork Period	April 2015; April-July 2016; September-October 2016; May 2017.	May-June 2017
Fieldwork Duration	14 weeks	8 weeks
Primary Locations	Huerto del Rey Moro; Miraflores Sur	Huerto del Rey Moro; Hinojos, Casa del Pumarejo; Huerta de Santa Marina; Parque del Alamillo; various locations across Seville.
No. of Primary Participatory Video Participants	3 female; 1 male	3 female; 5 male
Additional Video Participants	4 female; 12 male	3 female; 8 male
Qualitative Interviews	20	16
Additional Methods	Auto-ethnography Ethnography Participant observation 2 x Participatory thematic workshops 3 x Participatory editing workshops	Auto-ethnography Ethnography Participant Observation 1 x Participatory thematic workshop 3 x Participatory editing workshops
Outputs	First participatory video output, "*Jardin Interior: Garden Inside*"	Second participatory video output, "*La Boldina*"

Table 1. *Summary of Research Cycles*

Participatory Video-Making

Participatory video-making is a process through which people collectively tell their own stories in their own ways. No two participatory video projects are the same, but typically the process involves training a small group of people to 'storyboard', shoot, edit, and distribute a film that explores an issue that is important to them and their community. The emphasis of a participatory video-making process is on collaboration, cooperation, and co-learning, which enables participants to have a voice regardless of age, gender, culture, or ethnicity. The film belongs to those who make it.

Participatory video-making has emerged as a distinct methodology over the past twenty years with the increased availability and affordability of cameras and recording technology; primarily in the context of international development. Participatory video-making has been used extensively, for example, for monitoring and evaluation of multi-lateral development programmes in combination with other participatory methods such as Most Significant Change (Lunch, 2007). However, it is only in the past five years that we have begun to see substantive critical engagement with the practice, politics and ethics of participatory video-making and its potentials for research, as distinct from other participatory visual research methods such as Photovoice (See for example Milne, 2016; Milne et al., 2012; Mistry, Bignante, & Berardi, 2014; Shaw, 2016).

Overall what has emerged over the past decade is a more nuanced understanding of the potentials of a participatory video-making process to create spaces for critical engagement and active-learning that challenge academic dominance in knowledge production. As Kindon (2003: 144) argues,

> "The knowledges produced [through participatory video-making] are both for and by the participants, which challenges dominant representations and goes some way to breaking down usually hierarchical researcher/researched relationships."

The use of participatory video making represents a methodological innovation both in the context of the right to the city, and in the context of urban community gardens. Central to the idea of the right to the city is the notion of the social production of space, defined by Henri Lefebvre in terms of a triad of perceived, conceived and lived space (Lefebvre, 1991). Participatory video-making is an innovative way of understanding how space is perceived and represented by community groups. As such it has significant epistemic and social change-making potentials.

The field of participatory visual research is growing. Many of the critical discussions that have emerged around participatory photography (Wang & Burris, 1997), participatory map-making (Allen et al, 2015), and artistic enquiry (Pringle, 2002), are also relevant for participatory video-making. Writing on the subject of participatory photography, Luttrell and Chalfen (2010: 198) ask:

> "Are [the images] meant to 'illustrate' or 'complement' the text, or do they 'speak' for themselves? How are images selected, for what audiences and for what purposes? What of the tension between aesthetic and documentary aspects of photographs?"

These are all important questions for researchers using participatory video-making. In this project participatory video-making had three main purposes. The first was to generate qualitative data through interviews conducted within the video processes, by both me and by the gardeners, as well as ethnographic and auto-ethnographic material. The second was to generate critical spaces and an epistemologically-diverse process through which we, as a

group, might explore specific issues in greater depth than can be easily achieved by the use of one method, such as qualitative interviews, alone. The final purpose was to contribute to the work of the gardeners in Seville by enabling them to create their own media for external as well as internal use.

Urban agriculture groups, organisations, and communities are increasingly producing their own visual outputs, including maps, videos, websites, and photos to raise awareness and communicate the importance of the work that they are doing; a cursory search of urban agriculture projects online will turn up multiple examples, complete with visual media, from cities and towns across Europe. Participatory video-making is a form of media production that seeks to ensure that the gardeners have maximum voice in the production and dissemination of these outputs. The tension between the aesthetic and documentary aspects of the video-making process was an unanticipated source of discussion and insight. I return to this issue in Chapter 8.

The use of participatory video is also consistent with the transformative theoretical discourse of the right to the city, offering radical, democratic potentials for knowledge production and dissemination, and supporting transformative social change, as well as creating significant epistemological potentials for academic action-learning and research. The use of participatory video-making represents a potentially radical new perspective on the connections between the micro-politics of change and micro-transformations as performed and experienced by individuals in one location, to broader systemic politics and economics at the city-level.

Recently, there has also been a rise in critical literature that is specific to participatory video-making as distinct from other participatory visual research methods. Walsh (2016) argues that participatory video-makers must recognise the “liberal, technocratic presumptions” underpinning the practice, in order to realise a more collective and socially just outcome. Rogers (2016) warns against using participatory video to create “individualistic and deficit discourses” that marginalise participants. This project seeks to contribute to this critical discourse by reflecting on the ways that issues of power and positionality emerge through the participatory video process, as well as the various challenges and opportunities that the methodology enables. This reflection appears in Chapter 8 of the thesis.

This project comprised two distinct participatory video processes, one for each research cycle as depicted in Figure 1, above. The first and second participatory video processes followed similar procedures. However, there were also significant differences between them. Each process comprised six distinct elements. These elements were adapted from the participatory process developed by the UK-based participatory video NGO, InsightShare (Lunch & Lunch, 2006).

The main elements of each process are as follows: planning, technical training, thematic workshops, filming, participatory editing, screening. These elements are distinguished by the

fact that they provide participants with distinct opportunities for different forms of engagement with the video-making and research. Each element therefore represents a specific set of learning pathways, both for me as researcher and for the gardeners as participants.

Each element contains particular epistemological opportunities, as well as specific limitations and challenges. The ways that certain ideas emerged or were articulated within each element could be complementary, but they could also be contradictory. For example, gardeners may set out to represent a situation in one way when shooting the film, but this might be contradicted by the way the same situation in represented during and as a result of the participatory editing process. The dialogue between these distinct forms of engagement, and the opportunities to reflect on this dialogue, is one of the greatest opportunities of participatory video-making as a research methodology.

It is also important to note that the elements of each process often occurred simultaneously. For example, during the first participatory video-making process, the gardeners filmed the workshops during which we developed the themes of the film. Footage of these workshops was included, at the suggestion of the gardeners, in the final video output. The relationship between the different elements of a participatory video process is extremely complex and reciprocal.

To a great extent this means that within each process there are inherent and clear potentials for critical reflection; during the first process, on viewing the footage of the thematic workshops, gardeners reflected critically about the way they discuss issues and make decisions. However, with this complexity comes great difficulty for researchers in unpacking the process and attributing specific data or conclusions to specific research methods, or even specific conversations. Figure 2 below shows the different ways that the distinct elements occurred across the two processes. Note that the screening and discussion of the first short film, *Jardin Interior*, was a critical part of the development of the second film, *La Boldina*.

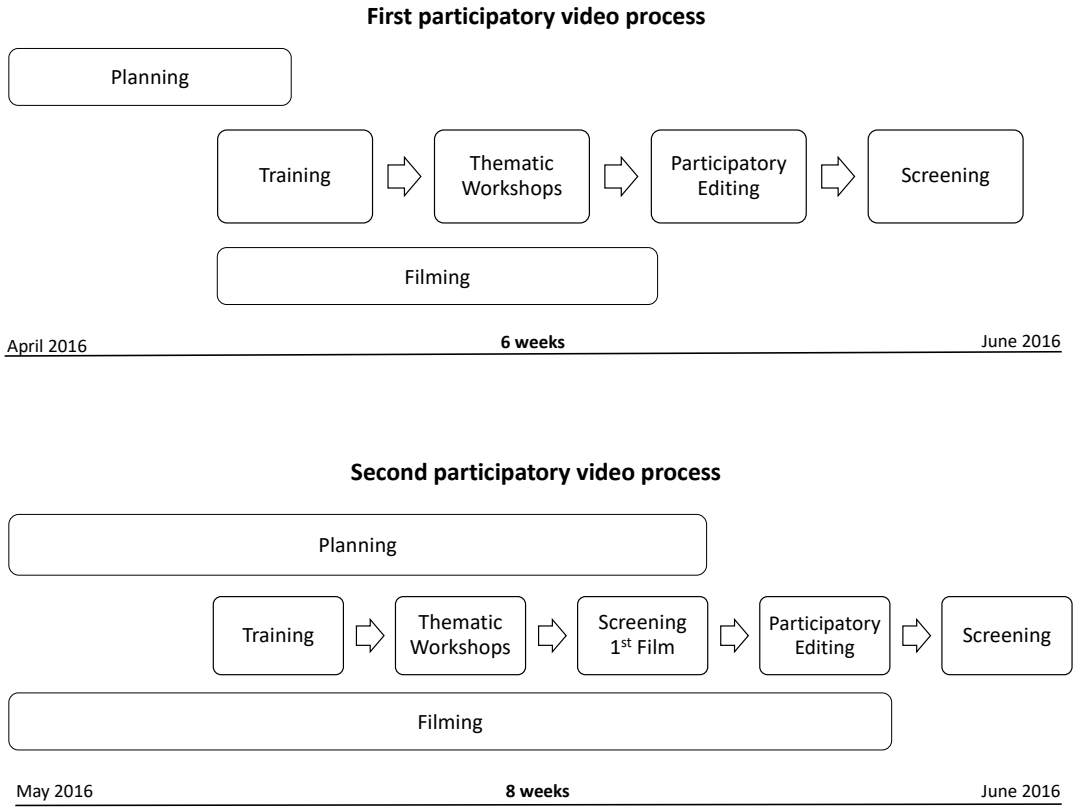

Figure 2. *A comparison of the first and second participatory video processes*

In this Chapter I use the terms *primary* and *additional* participants in the video-making process. This is to distinguish between those gardeners that were involved in every element of the process, including training, planning, shooting, editing and screening, and those that were involved in one or more elements, but not the entire process. One male and one female gardener were primary participants across both processes. Many of the additional participants from the first process became primary participants in the second. I realised that when working with this group of gardeners that I would need to be extremely adaptive in terms of how and when we conducted the video-making process to fit around their availability and existing commitments. At the same time, I did not want to exclude any gardeners from the process simply because that were unable to attend one or more occasions.

In both the first and second participatory video processes, the initial technical training was very brief; limited to one afternoon in in the first process with four gardeners, and one three-hour session with eleven participants in the second. Training was basic, tactile and collective. In each process, I sat the group in a circle around the bags containing the camera equipment. I asked one member to unpack the bags, another to set up the camera, another to set up the microphone, and another to set up the tripod. During this time, I did not touch the camera equipment, and encouraged the group to help one another to put together a filming set-up.

We then conducted a series of short exercises that encouraged the group to become familiar with the cameras, familiar with seeing themselves on film, and develop a supportive, critical culture within the group. For example, we recorded short interviews of each other talking about our favourite places in the city.

Each participant used the camera, used the audio recording equipment, and took a turn in front of the camera. We immediately watched back these short interviews back, using a laptop in the first video-making process, and a projector in the second. The groups then discussed the sound quality, exposure, and composition of each recording. The only rule I imposed at this point was that the group could only comment on the work of the person behind the camera and not in front of it. The aim of this exercise was not to teach the group a specific way to frame or compose shots when using the cameras, but to introduce them to engaging critically with film-making and, in doing so, support learning within the group. Technical training continued throughout the video-making processes, with some gardeners particularly keen to develop specific skills with the camera or editing software.

In order to plan the themes of the films we held discussions through workshops. In the first video process we conducted two workshops. The first followed an adapted form of a problem tree exercise. A problem tree exercise is a project management tool frequently used by international development agencies to identify and prioritise issues when designing interventions.[9] A problem tree is a map of challenges from cause to effect. The aim of the exercise is to think through the interrelations between different 'problems' and issues towards identifying a central challenge or set of challenges – the trunk of the tree – that is both a central cause and consequences of other issues. I asked the gardeners to think about 'problems' facing the garden, then problems facing the gardeners, then problems facing the wider city. These challenges were written on post-it notes and discussed at length before we began to map the causality and relationships between them. The workshop took half a day in total. In this instance, the issue of *communication* formed the 'trunk' of the tree.

The second workshop, held three days later, was designed to explore the issue of *communication* more deeply as a potential theme for a short film. First, the gardeners developed a mind map around the theme of communication. As we proceeded, their discussions progressed from communication as 'the message', to communication being about identities, motivations and relations between those communicating. As part of this workshop the gardeners also proposed a number of questions that they hoped might be addressed through the video-research process.

[9] For a detailed introduction to problem tree exercises see Guilt, I and Moiseev, A. (2001). Resource Kit for Sustainability Assessment. Cambridge: IUCN; UNESCAP (2003). Project Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Training Guide.

Following the workshops, we developed short, conversational interview questions based on some of the themes developed in the workshops and travelled between the two sites (Huerto del Rey Moro and Miraflores Sur) on multiple occasions to record short interviews with gardeners. Filming was conducted by the primary participants over a period of three weeks, during which I travelled with them between the sites and supported the recording of interviews with gardeners. The video cameras were also available to the group to take away and use to record events or further interviews in the gardens. Two of the primary participants regularly borrowed the equipment to continue filming activities in the garden and record interviews when I was not present.

In the second participatory video process, we held only one thematic workshop with the primary participants. In part this reflected changes in the organisation of the group, which made making time for the video process in their already busy schedules more challenging. The group of primary participants were part of a permaculture collective, La Boldina, introduced in detail in Chapter 6, who met regularly on Monday evenings. We were able to use some of this time to develop the themes of the film however the overall thematic development was more scattered and spontaneous; taking place through conversations with members of the group in different locations at opportune moments.

The primary thematic development took place at one of La Boldina's weekly meetings when we arranged a screening of the film, *Jardin Interior*, which had been produced in the first video process. We used this as an opportunity to discuss the changes in the gardens and their organisation over past year and develop ideas about the scope of the film and their vision for urban agriculture in Seville.

In the first video process, after filming, the element of editing the film together began with a 'paper edit'. This starts with the construction of a 'paper timeline' – using post-it notes and other materials – that replicates the way editing software is used to edit films. Over the course of three days, the primary participants reviewed all of the footage captured during the filming period (approximately seven hours). We initially selected clips for inclusion by drawing the scene, noting the time-code and file-pathway, and writing short description of each clip on a post-it note. There was no consensus as to a precise message or the themes of the film. As such it retained a 'messiness', reflected in the non-linear storytelling, and inconsistent exploration of central ideas. The aim, we agreed, was to produce an "honest" film, rather than a promotional one.

The post-its were initially grouped thematically before we began to lay out specific sections of the film shot by shot. I then reproduced the timeline using Adobe Premier Pro video editing software and showed the resulting film in a small screening with the primary participants. At this point, they gave feedback and I made their suggested changes to the film. This process was repeated three times before we had a final product. The subtitles were added at this point,

written collectively by myself, one of the primary participants, and a UK visitor to the garden who was working in Spain.

In the second video making process we also conducted a paper timeline, although this time with twelve co-editors. We watched approximately eight hours of recordings over a period of three half day workshops. This time I copied the timeline to the editing software with the help of one of the primary participants who wanted to learn how to use editing software. We arranged one screening of the film with the group who discussed changes and suggested edits. I then returned to the UK and we continued to discuss the draft versions of the video, shared privately between us via email.

The first film was disseminated widely and is publicly available on Vimeo.com and many other websites. The second film, at the time of writing, has not been publicly released. I reflect more critically on the video-making process in Chapter 8.

Qualitative Interviews

This project uses semi-structured qualitative interviews to triangulate and deepen the understanding of issues as they arose through the participatory video processes. The interviews were informed by an adapted form of narrative inquiry, "[focusing on] an interest in life experiences by those who live them" (Chase, 2011: 421). This is a pragmatic, applied approach to qualitative interviews that focuses on the form and content of narratives as constructed and communicated by participants.

During the first cycle of research I conducted twenty interviews with gardeners and people involved with the gardens across two sites. The majority of these interviews were with people that had been approached initially by the participants in the video-making process. However, additional interviews were conducted with local academics and people involved in the management of the gardens, who I approached for interview separately. In Chapters 4-8 of this thesis, I note whether the interview took place through a participatory video-making process or whether I approached the interviewee outside of the participatory video processes.

In addition to the qualitative interviews conducted either by me or the primary participants in the participatory video-making process, I also conducted a series of longer and more in-depth interviews with the primary participants. These interviews focused to a greater extent on narrative identity, conceived as "internalised and evolving life stories" (McAdams, Josselson, & Lieblich, 2006: 5), which is important in the context of this research for exploring the concept of "lived space" as defined by Lefebvre, and also for exploring more deeply the relationship between urban space and community. In these longer interviews we not only discussed issues that overlapped significantly with the scope and focus of the video-making, I

also asked interviewees to reflect critically on the process of participatory video-making as a form of research and engagement.

(Auto)Ethnography

This research project also used a combination of ethnographic observation and First-Person Inquiry (auto-ethnography). Both forms of inquiry were used to document the research process and serve as a basis for critical analysis of the processes of participatory video-making and PAR in Chapter 8.

Throughout each period of fieldwork, I maintained an (auto)ethnographic account of the process in the form of a research diary. In the diary I wrote a daily account of the research process, as well as reflected on the implications of emerging findings for my research project as a whole. I also reflected on the challenges that I had identified during the research as well as on and my positionality vis a vis the research and the gardeners.

The diary became the explicit basis for Chapter 8 in this thesis, however it also influenced the research in a number of other ways. Firstly, it was through my daily process of recording and reflecting that a coherent narrative for the project emerged. It meant that the conclusions and overall arguments of this thesis were revisited and revised on an almost daily basis. Secondly, the process of (auto)ethnography enabled me to track the development of specific ideas and themes, many of which changed in nature and prominence throughout the research process. Thirdly, the fieldnotes recorded within the research diary served as a critical source of insight when I later came to analyse and interpret my fieldwork data.

Finally, the nature of my engagement in Seville, becoming closely integrated with the groups of gardeners – spending the vast majority of my time in the gardens or working closely with the gardeners – meant that there was much ‘data’ that could not be captured adequately in either qualitative interviews of the participatory video-making processes. My research diary became the primary way that I recorded incidental conversations and insights, discussions, conflicts, contradictions, further questions, and concerns. These insights have been critical in developing and articulating the main arguments in this thesis.

Analytical Process and Write-up

This thesis draws on all three modes of investigation; participatory video, qualitative interviews, and (auto)ethnography. In particular it draws on over 38000 words of transcribed interviews, and more than 40 hours of film footage, as well as my research diary. The initial literature review and methodology, Chapters 2 and 3, were drafted in the first year of my PhD, from 2015-16. Both were substantially updated and redrafted in the second half of 2017, my

third year, to reflect recently published literature relating to urban agriculture, as well as adaptations made to the methodology during the three periods of fieldwork.

My aim when beginning to analyse the participatory video, qualitative and (auto)ethnographic data, was to develop a form of thematic analysis that would allow me to visualise the three streams of information side by side. To this end I developed an adapted form of an analytical matrix based upon the Framework Method, an approach to thematic, qualitative analysis that aims to, "identify commonalities and differences in qualitative data, before focusing on relationships between different parts of the data, thereby seeking to draw descriptive and/or explanatory conclusions clustered around themes" (Gale et al, 2013: 2).

Following Gale et al's (2013) Framework Method, I initially transcribed all interviews and video material. Interviews in Spanish were transcribed by an agency, parts of which I translated into English. I transcribed interviews conducted in English in full. I then reread/re-listened to all material to re-familiarise myself with the interviews that had been conducted over a period of fourteen months.

Next, I began the process of coding the interviews. I coded the interviews in three phases, each of which corresponded with new, distinct engagement with the material. In the first phase I coded the transcripts according to the key themes that had emerged from the participatory video processes with the gardeners in Seville, themes that they had either suggested explicitly, or had emerged from discussions during the research process. In the second phase I used a more inductive and interpretive approach to coding the transcripts, identifying themes that overlapped with or were relevant in the context of the idea of the right to the city.

I then developed a matrix that plotted on the y-axis the periods of fieldwork by date, alongside a detailed, day by day account of the participatory video making process and other research activities. In a third, parallel column I pasted a summary of my (auto)ethnographic account from my research diary, including making specific note of when new themes emerged or developed. Across the x-axis I listed the themes that had emerged explicitly from the gardeners, as well as themes that had emerged from my inductive coding process of the transcripts. The matrix was then populated with extended quotes and sections of interviews from across the two cycles of fieldwork.

The aim of presenting and analysing the information in this way was to recognise and maintain the interrelations between the different participatory and non-participatory research elements and the development of specific ideas, themes and conclusions through the research process. I believe that this is important in order to recognise the diversity of modes of investigation within this project, as well as enabling me to better account for my own influence on the thematic development of the research.

Presenting the words and ideas of the gardeners in this way ensured that they were not decontextualised from the action research activities that we were engaged in together. It is important, for example, to recognise the ways that some ideas emerged from specific workshops or developed in the context of a participatory editing process rather than through conversation or in the context of an interview. These thematic clusters corresponded with particular themes as well as particular stages of the research.

The four most significant clusters of themes form the basis of the four analytical Chapters, Chapters 4-7 in this thesis. The four main thematic clusters that emerged were: the role of narrative in the urban community gardens; the socio-spatial impacts of the gardens and challenges constraining these impacts; the process and politics of self-organisation within and around urban gardens; and the processes of collective learning through urban agriculture.

My third and final round of coding was more systematic and more deductive, drawing on both the transcripts as well as patterns and clusters of themes that had emerged in the matrix. Accordingly, I coded the transcripts for a final time in order to identify subthemes within these larger thematic clusters. A simplified version of the analytical matrix can be seen below, Table 2.

		PV and research process	(Auto)-ethnographic account	1st coding: themes proposed by gardeners	2nd coding: themes relating to right to the city	3rd coding: consolidated themes and sub-themes
Cycle 1	2nd period fieldwork	2015-16	2015-16	Communication; transformation	*Autogestion;* Narrative	Resistance, Restoration, Motivations
	3rd period fieldwork	2016	2016	Impact of the gardens	Spatial significance of gardens; heterotopic space	Challenges
Cycle 2	4th period fieldwork	2017	2017	Permaculture	*Autogestion*; learning the city	Collective learning

Table 2. *A simplified schematic of the adapted Framework Method analytical matrix, not including 1st period of fieldwork (scoping visit).*

Case Study and Site Selection

Seville was chosen initially for this research project for its diversity of self-managed urban community gardens. The first scoping visit was made to Seville in April 2015 as part of a Seed Exchange, organised by *Red de Semillas Andalucíaía* (Andalusian Seed Network), with participants from UK, Italy, Hungary, France and Germany. I was invited to attend along with the UK party organised by Garden Organic's Heritage Seed Library (Ryton). The exchange included visits to five urban agriculture projects in the city, and discussions with producers at each site. The gardens visited were: Huerto del Rey Moro; Isla de Tercia; Miraflores Sur; Torreblanca; and Parque de Alamillo.

Miraflores Sur is the largest urban garden in Seville, with over 160 individual plots of approximately 60 square metres and ten shared plots of approximately 150 sq. metres. Huerto del Rey Moro is the smallest site, and the only one located within the Casco Antiguo. The two gardens present the most extreme contrasts, spatially and organisationally, within the existing gardens, and as such were chosen as sites for my primary research. (I outline in more detail the process of choosing the case studies in Chapter 8). The gardeners from both sites showed an interest and a willingness to participate in a participatory video process, however the primary participants all came from Huerto del Rey Moro. In Chapter 4, I introduce in more detail the history and current situation of urban community gardens in Seville.

Andalucía, like much of southern Europe, was severely impacted by the 2007-08 economic crisis. The response to high levels of unemployment amongst young people at the time has led to a particularly vibrant community of artists, artisans and start-up enterprises that co-exist with and interact in various ways with the urban community gardens, especially Huerto del Rey Moro. These dynamic and highly visible forms of self-organisation resonated immediately with my preliminary reading on the idea of the right to the city, as well as on themes such as diverse economies and food sovereignty, which were initially considered as theoretical frameworks for this project.

In terms of the urban agriculture discourse, Seville is an extremely under-researched city. There exists a small number of books and articles on the subject, all of which focus on Miraflores Sur. One local academic, Raul Puente Asuero, based at Universidad de Pablo Olavida (UPO) is the main authority on urban agriculture in the city. He wrote his doctoral thesis on Miraflores Sur and has been involved in almost every example of research on urban agriculture in the city for the past ten years. However, there is little thematic or methodological overlap between this project and the work of Raul Puente Asuero, which focuses more on the environmental impacts of urban gardens, and the connections between today's urban gardens and historical urban agriculture in the region.

Ethical Considerations

This research process abided by all Coventry University ethical guidelines. Peer-reviewed ethical approval was attained before any fieldwork began. However, the nature of this project is such that there are some specific ethical considerations that are were covered insufficiently by the University's ethical process.

The participatory video processes raised a specific set of ethical issues. For example, in solely qualitative fieldwork it is important to make very clear to the interviewee the scope of the study and how their information will be stored and used. In the case of participatory video-making, the themes of the film, and thus the object of consent, evolves throughout the process. University ethical approval is not able to sufficiently reflect the dynamic nature of Participatory Action Research.

We managed this by explaining to each gardener interviewed in the process how we were using the film within my wider PhD process, and making clear that they could withdraw their consent for the footage to be used, up until a specified future date when the film would be made public. We provided an information sheet including contact information, and asked each person interviewed both within and outside of the video-making process to sign a consent form indicting not only that they consented for the footage to be used within the video and research processes, but that they understood both the scope and purpose of these processes.

It is also important to note that some of the interviews and filming took place in squatted locations. Whilst Huerto del Rey Moro is technically an occupied space, the garden is sufficiently public that there were no concerns from the gardeners that filming in the space might compromise the security of the project. Moreover, Huerto del Rey Moro has a public website which includes videos of the garden. However, filming also took place in two squatted houses. Although these properties have been occupied for more than a year, and there is no immediate threat of eviction, there is a very real chance that the groups could be evicted by the police at any time. Therefore, interviews that took place in these locations are referred to as having taken place at an undisclosed location so as not to publicly reveal the address, or even the neighbourhood of the sites.

In the following Chapters I include a number of quotations from gardens and other actors recorded during fieldwork. Following each quotation I identify the gender of the speaker but do not include their name or other identifying information. However there are two exceptions to this rule. The first is if the respondent is a public figure, taking part in the research in full knowledge of the purpose of the interview and having consented to taking part. The second is if the quotation comes from the first participatory video output which was made publicly available in 2016, with the full consent of all individuals that appear in it. After each quotation I also list whether it comes from within the first or second participatory video processes, or from

a semi-structured qualitative interview that I conducted alone. I also list the month of the interview/recording as well as the location, except when the location might compromise the security of the speaker as described above.

A Note on the Participatory Video Outputs

The output film, *Jardin Interior : Garden Inside*, was released publicly on 25th July 2016, hosted on Vimeo and later also on YouTube. The film is 28 minutes 10 seconds long including credits. The film is accompanied by a short, written introduction in both English and Spanish, which I co-authored with one of the gardeners. The title of the film refers to an expression frequently used by one of the gardeners in Huerto del Rey Moro, who talks about looking after one's 'inner', metaphorical garden, as well as the physical garden, in order to reiterate the connection between urban gardening and wellbeing.

The film introduces each garden, before addressing specific themes, such as 'communication' and 'learning', across each garden sequentially. Interviews recorded in one location are only combined with images of that location until the film's conclusion, when footage shot in Huerto del Rey Moro is combined with interview excerpts taken from other locations. In order to clarify this dynamic, each change of location is accompanied by one or two scenic images from the upcoming site. All music in the film was recorded by the gardeners in Huerto del Rey Moro.

On release, the film was widely shared on social media as well as through dedicated mailing lists such as the FAO managed 'Food-for-Cities' D-group listserv. It was also published a number of websites including the Resource Centre on Urban Agriculture and Food Security (RUAF) website;[10] City Farmer;[11] the Huerto del Rey Moro website;[12] Agroecology Now;[13] as well as on The Canadian Food Studies Journal website, accompanied by a short article entitled, "Garden Inside: Communication, Representation and Transformation in Seville's Urban Gardens."[14]

The film has also been screened at the American Association of Geographers (AAG) 2017 Annual Conference short film competition, *Boston Shorts*, and screened in part at the Royal Geographical Society/Institute of British Geographers (RGS/IBG) Annual conference in 2017 as part of a session entitled, "Emerging Voices in Political Geography: Fragments from our Research."

The second film, *La Boldina*, takes its name from the permaculture collective that made the film. The film introduces in rapid succession five projects that the group are working on inside and outside of Seville. The film is 13 minutes 45 seconds long including credits. The film is not currently publicly available.

[10] www.ruaf.org
[11] www.cityfarmer.com
[12] www.huertodelreymoro.org
[13] www.agroecologynow.com
[14] http://canadianfoodstudies.uwaterloo.ca/index.php/cfs

Chapter 4: The Role of Historical and Contemporary Narratives in Constructing Urban Community Gardens

> *This neighbourhood and community for me is not like any other. This was the last community that is a descendent of the republic and was destroyed. The Expo of 1992 brought people from all over Europe that ended up destroying the community from bad management. From all of the destruction, all the neighbours gathered together with a social conscience and said that we want to take our neighbourhood back* (interview with female gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, May 2017).
>
> *Each person relates to others through shared memories and transforms the garden into what it could be* (Luciano Furcas, Huerto del Rey Moro, June 2016, first participatory video process).

Urban gardens exist as material spaces, bounded and finite. At the same time, they are continuously re-imagined through the diverse ways that people interact with and experience these spaces. Lefebvre (1991) proposes a dynamic conception of space, through which material, architectural space and perceived space are related through lived experience. In this way, Lefebvre's space is active, dynamic, relational and subjective. This Chapter explores the idea that narrative is both consciously and unconsciously constructed through the experience of lived space which both reflects and shapes actions therein.

To a great extent, urban community gardeners reflect the neighbourhoods they inhabit (Staeheli et al 2002). Just as in the wider city, groups of gardeners from one locality can be homogenous or diverse. However, the constitution of the community of gardeners, and the significance of the gardens is also determined by a number of drivers, processes, and trends that extend beyond the neighbourhood.

Both the space and the community that constitute an urban garden are shaped by broader political, social, economic, and ecological factors. For example, urban gardening may be taken up by primarily low-income or affluent residents; urban gardens may emerge in liminal spaces or may be actively promoted by and receive investment from local government; uptake of gardens may also be determined by how the natural environment is valued in a given context. Lefebvre emphasised the dialectical relationship between the ways a space is rationalised or planned, how people perceived or use the space, and how people experience this lived space through emotion, memory, and imagination.

Whilst each of these factors is critical for characterising the rise of urban community gardens as a product of local, national, regional, and/or international trends, the significance of each factor depends on how they are interpreted at the local level. Individual and collective motivations for urban gardening depend on the extent to which the perceived benefits of the activity resonate with socially-constructed narratives regarding food systems, community, urban space, and sustainability, amongst many others.

This Chapter asks: what are the main narratives that have emerged from within two urban community gardens in Seville; how have these narratives emerged; and to what extent does the idea of the right to the city help us to understand the actual and potential significance of these narratives for creating and sustaining urban community gardens?

In order to answer these questions, I not only look at the ways that narratives are created, shared and contested amongst the gardeners, but the ways that these narratives relate to broader, historical, socio-political, and spatial struggles and processes. I introduce the idea of socially-constructed 'myths' to account for the ways that contemporary issues and concerns relate to social memory and historical awareness to influence the production and management of the gardens.

First, this Chapter briefly introduces the concept of narratives. Next, it gives an overview of urban community gardens in their political, social and geographical context. The Chapter then outlines the current state of urban agriculture in Seville today, with a detailed introduction to Miraflores Sur and Huerto del Rey Moro where the primary research took place. I then present evidence for the role of narrative in creating and sustaining today's gardens. Finally, I reflect on the ways that Lefebvre's conception of space helps us characterise the role of narrative in constructing gardens as dynamic and multi-dimensional urban spaces.

A Note on the Concept of Narrative

Narrative is socially constructed through the verbal and non-verbal communication of interpretations of real world events. Narratives can impart meaning and context to an action, process, or situation; both reflecting and informing our interpretations of reality. In constructing a narrative, narrators sequence temporal events. This sequence does not necessarily imply causality, but rather reveals an order in which events have been or ought to be understood. In this way, narratives can be considered not as a way of comprehending or representing reality, but of creating it.

Narratives emerge through the collective, cultural application of ideas; by exploring the creation of narratives we can unpack the hidden social geographies that contribute to the creation of urban community gardens. This article adopts an approach to narrative that focuses on memory, community and identity, three categories that correspond with the basic

elements of narrative: plot, setting and character – the *what*, the *where*, and the *who* – as proposed by Hinchman and Hinchman (1997).

Collective narratives can play a critical role in community-building (Gergen & Gergen, 2006), both in terms of aiding people in making shared sense of past events and framing a discourse regarding the future. For Hannah Arendt (1958), the production and reproduction of stories was bound to processes of collective memory. Arendt emphasises the performativity of memories in her conception of the *polis*; the democratic, political heart of the ancient Greek city; as either performer or witness, all citizens contributed to the democratic project.

> "The Greek *polis*, beyond making possible the sharing of words and deeds and multiplying the occasions to win immortal fame, was meant to remedy the frailty of human affairs. It did this by establishing a framework where action and speech could be recorded and transformed into stories, where every citizen could be a witness and thereby a potential narrator" (d'Entreves 2016).

It is important to distinguish between narrative as a product of narrative enquiry, which emphasises language and discourse, and makes sense of past events, and implicit collective, cultural narratives, which may underlie, but not necessarily agree entirely with, individual accounts of past events. This Chapter focuses on the latter form of narrative. This distinction is critical for unpacking the important discrepancies between individual testimony, collective understanding, and historical record. It is important to note that the Chapter does not employ any form of discourse analysis focusing on individual use of language. This is for two reasons. First, because the original interviews were constructed in Spanish, and discourse markers are not readily translatable into English. And second, because this Chapter aims to examine processes of collective narrative-building that are not synonymous with individual accounts.

With the exception of a small number of articles, the role of narratives in the construction of urban community gardens represents a significant gap in the existing research. Schmelzkopf (2002), for example, argued that New York's urban community gardens became the focal point of conflict in the contested narrative of urban space. Elsewhere, Moragues-Faus and Morgan (2015) have argued that two powerful yet contested narratives are converging – urbanisation and sustainability – which put cities at the centre of developmental discussions in both the global North and South.

In the 1950s, Situationist architects, heavily influenced by Lefebvre, began creating maps of what they termed the 'psycho-geographies' of urban spaces which emphasised both the lived experience of urban inhabitants and their memories of the city. This tradition has influenced countless architects and artists to develop a more vernacular approach to urban map-making. Mikey Tomkins (2012), in particular, has developed a methodology for producing vernacular, participatory maps of urban agriculture at the city-level, such as the Edible Map Project. This

approach is very useful for exploring the lived experience of urban inhabitants as they relate to urban agriculture, but the nature of map-making makes it difficult to capture the dynamic and often-contradictory character of the narratives that both inform and are informed by lived experience.

This Chapter explores both the connections between today's urban community gardens and historical processes in Seville, as well as the various narratives that have created and sustained these spaces, focusing on narratives and motivations for gardening as expressed by the gardeners themselves. The Chapter argues that narratives of *resistance* and *restoration* both productively frame and limit the potentials of urban community gardens in Seville.

The terms, 'resistance' and 'restoration' were identified inductively from early analysis of video material and interview transcripts to categorise two distinct forms of narrative that emerged from the research process. They are not specifically defined, nor are they dependent on a theoretical framework, but rather they emerged as categories for identifying similarities in thoughts and values between participants and between sites. Broadly, narratives of resistance relate to the idea of collective struggles for green public space in Seville, in reaction to contemporary urban trends as well as in solidarity with historical actors. Equally broadly, narratives of restoration bring together the ideas of recuperation, rehabilitation, and rejuvenation that emerged from activities and conversations with, and observation of, groups of urban gardeners.

Seville's Urban Gardens in Historical Context

The City of Seville was founded as the Roman city of *Hispalis*, although it is likely that the site was settled earlier. The city was conquered by the Moorish settlers in 712 AD, before being retaken by the Castilians in 1248 AD. The planning and architectural legacies of both Roman and Moorish occupations of the city are still apparent, including public buildings, street layout, and water management infrastructure. In the early Sixteenth Century, Seville became Spain's most important port for ships returning from the Americas. However, the vast wealth brought by early colonists did not accumulate in the city, but rather was taken to other major cities such as Madrid. By the end of the Sixteenth Century, Seville was no longer the primary port for colonists and in the Seventeenth Century a plague decimated the city's population, which did not recover until the Nineteenth Century.

The first published map of Seville, produced in 1771, shows fields and farmland pressed right up against the city walls that today mark the boundary of the *Casco Antiguo* (Old Town). Raul Puente Asuero (2012) traces agriculture in and around the city back to antiquity, including the Roman and Moorish occupations of the city. However, within the city walls, these were

predominantly private gardens for the wealthy and privileged, whilst other, less affluent citizens laboured in nearby fields outside of the city.

The *Alameda de Hercules*, constructed in the Fifteenth Century, should be considered the first public urban garden not only in Seville, but in Europe (Torres Garcia 2017). *Alamedas* usually take the shape of an elongated rectangular public square. Whilst they are common in Spain, *Alamedas* do not have the symbolic significance of other recognisable urban forms such as *Plaza Mayors*, which can be found in every city and play a specific role in State events. As such *Alamedas* have frequently adapted to reflect and meet the needs of the local population (Ibid). In Seville the *Alameda* was established on land close to the river that was liable to flooding and, as such, remained undeveloped (the *Alameda* is visible in Figure 4, below). It was the first garden in the city to welcome a diverse public; frescos have survived from the period that show wealthy and poor residents sharing the space. Today the *Alameda* is still a lively public space, approximately one kilometre from Huerto del Rey Moro, but it is no longer a garden.

In Spain, the rise of urban agriculture can also be traced back to agrarian transitions in the Nineteenth Century. Urban food production was particularly prominent during the Spanish Civil War, for example during the siege of Madrid (1936-39), where 'emergency gardens' and 'popular kitchens' were part of a critical coping infrastructure (Fernandez Casadevante & Moran, 2015). For this reason, some of Spain's urban gardens have been characterised as "pockets of socio-ecological memory" (Barthel et al, 2014; Pouraid, 2015).

Andalucía has a strong and distinct regional identity. The Autonomous Community of Andalucía was established under the 1981 Statute of Autonomy following the dissolution of Fascist Spain. Today the Region is divided into eight Provinces, including Seville. Andalucía is famous for its long, hot, dry summers, although the plentiful winter rain means that it has an above average yearly rainfall for Spain. This asymmetry means that all forms of agriculture, urban and rural, rely heavily on water management.

From the 1870s until the late 1930s, Andalucía was the heartland of a popular libertarian anarchist revolution. Until it was repressed violently by Franco's Fascists in the 1930s, this popular movement represented what Murray Bookchin has called "the greatest proletarian and peasant revolution to occur over the past two centuries" (1994: 3). These anarchist modes of self-management and self-governance originated in rural villages, but swiftly spread to rapidly growing cities across Spain, particularly in Catalonia and Andalucía.

> "[Spanish anarchism] sought out the precapitalist traditions of the village, nourished what was living and vital in them, evoked their revolutionary potentialities as liberatory modes of mutual aid and self-management, and deployed them to vitiate the obedience, hierarchical mentality, and authoritarian outlook fostered by the factory system" (Bookchin, 1994: 7-8).

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to explore in any depth the important political achievements of the Spanish anarchists, such as the Internationalists, and anarcho-syndicalists such as the *Confederación Nacional del Trabajo* (CNT) (National Confederation of Labour). But it is important to note that the anarchist movement emphasised collective decision-making through popular assemblies; 'integral personality', emphasising individual, intellectual as well as collective, social development; and federalism over isolation. In the latter part of the Twentieth Century, the CNT split into the *Confederación General del Trabajo de España* (CGT) (Spanish General Confederation of Labour), and the continuing CNT. The CGT and CNT remain, however their membership has dwindled significantly; today in Andalucía, the CNT has less than a thousand members. The CGT acts predominantly as a labour union, with little relationship to the anarchist social mission of the CNT. These historical processes do not have direct links to contemporary gardens in Seville. But they form part of a shared cultural memory that influences how urban gardeners construct narratives and communities today.

Seville currently has a population of approximately 700,000 people. After a long period of urban population decline, the past twenty-five years has seen a process of re-urbanisation (Lopez-Gay, 2015), however the current population has decreased from its zenith in 2002. In the second half of the Twentieth Century, national trends towards decreasing household size contributed to an increased demand for housing, and the subsequent suburbanisation of the city.

In June 2016, the City Hall passed Resolution No.446, outlining for the first time specific departmental responsibilities for urban gardens. The responsibilities are divided between the Mayor's Office, the Department for Urban Habitat, Culture and Tourism, and the Department for Education, Citizen Participation and Municipal Buildings. In 2016 the City Hall also initiated a project with Universidad de Pablo de Olavida to develop a network of existing urban gardens in the city. An accompanying vast piece of research, conducted across 2016-17, details the current state of urban gardens in Seville. The final report includes detailed maps of all sites and information on site management, growing methods, demographics, and governance. However, the report remains unpublished and it is unclear how the City Hall intends to use the information. The report details fifteen existing urban gardens in Seville, with the majority located in the periphery. The gardens are diverse in terms of how and when they began, the demographics of the gardeners, and their relationships with the City Hall. The number of gardens has gradually increased over the past fifteen years (Puente Asuero, 2012), although there are only two commercial projects in the city currently.[15] With the exception of infrastructure development, the gardens are managed by the gardeners or

[15] One of the two productive projects was not included in the report as it is an urban aquaponic commercial enterprise that is not accessible by the public, thus falling outside the remit of the report.

associations of gardeners. The study offers the following characteristics that describe the urban gardens in the city:

- Gardens managed by public administration or citizen associations
- Vegetable gardens located on public or private land
- Gardens with the main purpose of leisure, social and/or educational activities
- Gardens dedicated to family self-consumption or non-profit donation of products.
- Vegetable gardens that allow free access to all citizens
- Orchards in which urban agriculture is not the end, but the means to achieve social, cultural, environmental, etc. objectives (Puente Asuero, unpublished).

The study identifies the following gardens in the city: Miraflores Sur; San Jerónimo; Huerto del Rey Moro; Alcosa I; Alcosa II; Polideportivo de Torreblanca; Hacienda San Antonio; Miraflores Norte - Pino Montano; Bellavista; Alamillo; Vega de Triana; IES Joaquín Romero Murube; and Parque Guadaira. Of these gardens, Miraflores Sur and Huerto del Rey Moro represent the greatest contrast in terms of their size, growing practices, and institutional relationships.

Huerto del Rey Moro and Miraflores Sur

Huerto del Rey Moro is an occupied (*huerto okupado*), community-managed garden in the Macarena district of Seville's Old Town. The garden occupies approximately 2000 square metres between Calle Sol and Calle Enladrillada, making it the smallest of the fifteen urban gardens recognised by the City Hall in 2016-7. The garden grows a combination of vegetables, aromatics, and medicinal plants according to a combination of organic and permaculture principles. The communal areas are used by adults, children and visitors to the garden on a daily basis primarily as open public space.

Huerto del Rey Moro is managed on a daily basis by a small number of gardeners, varying seasonally between 10-30 people. Longer-term planning and management decisions are taken by a neighbourhood assembly of approximately 50 people that is held on the last Sunday of each month. This includes the gardeners that work in the space on a day-to-day basis as well as local residents and other long-term users of the space. The site hosts a variety of workshops, festivals and public events throughout the year, including weekly bread-making workshops and 'bio-construction' workshops in which structures for the garden, as well as other community-managed spaces, are built from reclaimed materials.

The monthly assemblies comprise approximately 40-50 people; decisions are taken collectively regarding the planning and management of the space, as well as how funds raised by hosting festivals and parties should be allocated. There are also occasional special assemblies to discuss specific topics, or debate issues. For example, in June 2017 a special

assembly was held to discuss the allocation of newly-created individual raised beds to local residents.

Miraflores Sur is a community-managed growing space on the site of a farm known as Huerta las Moreras within Parque de Miraflores in the North of Seville, approximately three kilometres from Huerto del Rey Moro. The land that now constitutes the park was a flood plain for the river that ran through Seville. As Seville expanded rapidly during the Twentieth Century, agricultural land was rapidly transformed into dense high-rise areas; aerial photographs from 1956 show the land that would become the park surrounded by farmland. The propensity of the land to flood led to it being designated a Green Zone in the 1960s. (The river has since been diverted and there is no longer a risk of flooding). However, the site quickly became a dumpsite for construction debris and was almost entirely inaccessible to the local population.

In 1983, the organisation, Comité Pro-Parque Educativo Miraflores, was established by local residents with the aim of developing the land into a public park that respected the social, cultural heritage of the area. Monthly citizen assemblies were initially held on the site in order to determine the future of the space and allocate resources. The entire park now covers 847000 square metres and includes large areas for sports and other activities.

Miraflores Sur gardens were established within the park in 1991. The gardens comprise 36400 square metres (less than 5% of the total park area). The gardens were launched alongside two educational programmes, funded by the City Hall, in collaboration with local schools. These were the first programmes of their kind in Spain and remain a model for other urban garden-educational projects in Spain (Puente Asuero, ND).

Comité Pro-Parque Educativo Miraflores has been widely recognised for its work. Parque de Miraflores was included in the First Spanish Catalogue of Good Citizen Practices (1996), and the project was presented at the UN Habitat II international conference in the same year. Despite institutional recognition of the organisation, funding has been cut considerably for its education programme as well for staffing; from four full-time staff to zero.

The gardens are now divided up into 162 individual plots, as well as ten school gardens and a limited amount of communal space. The allocation of plots and management of resources is overseen by a Cultural Association headed by an elected gardener. The land is owned by the City Hall, which also takes responsibility for water, electricity, infrastructure development, and maintenance such as pathways, water access, and security fences.

Today the gardeners are predominantly retired people from the local area; retired men hold the majority of plots. Each year, disused plots, averaging ten to twelve, are reallocated by drawing applications out of a hat. As the gardens receive proportionately more applications each year from retired locals than younger residents or families, the retired community continues to form a majority.

The two maps, Figures 3 and 4, below show the locations of Miraflores Sur and Huerto del Rey Moro within Seville.

Figure 3. *Map of Seville produced by the author using Google Earth, Snagit, Adobe Photoshop, and Microsoft PowerPoint. The yellow line approximately marks Seville's Old Town. The white line approximately marks the area of the Macarena district that extends into the Old Town (inset Figure 4). The red line marks Parque de Miraflores. The orange line approximately identifies Miraflores Sur gardens within Parque de Miraflores.*

Figure 4. *Inset map of Macarena showing location of Huerto del Rey Moro. Image produced by the author using Google Earth, Snagit, Adobe Photoshop, and Microsoft PowerPoint. The yellow circle shows the approximate location of Huerto del Rey Moro. The white line within the circle shows the boundaries of the garden. The large open space to the far left of the image is the Alameda de Hercules. The main road that passes from the top to the bottom of the image marks the historic boundary of the Old Town.*

Community narratives in Huerto del Rey Moro and Miraflores Sur are continuously reproduced and reimagined by the gardeners and the local communities. As mentioned above, two narrative threads emerged from my early data analysis – narratives of resistance and narratives of restoration – that reflect and in turn shape how gardeners perceive and experience the garden. In order to draw out these narratives and better understand how they relate to the ongoing use of the gardens as dynamic spaces, I will draw on both the first participatory video process that took place across the two sites in 2016, as well as semi-structured qualitative interviews with gardeners from both sites across 2016-17.

In the following section I explore the extent to which urban gardening practices today reflect and relate to historical processes in Seville and Andalucía. Specifically, I consider how far the narratives that have emerged to justify the existence, and account for the significance, of the gardens relates to historical fact: to what extent are historical events being appropriated to

justify and support the existence of Huerto del Rey Moro and Miraflores Sur? I also consider the extent which collectively-constructed 'myths' are critical to the creation and maintenance of urban community gardens as dynamic and active spaces.

Narratives of Resistance and Public Space

The first significant narrative, observable in both Huerto del Rey Moro and Miraflores Sur, relates to the idea of resistance. The narrative is not necessarily consistent. Rather, it is a useful way of characterising the collective justification and 'story' of the garden. The inconsistency of the narrative reflects its amorphous and collective character. While a significant majority of gardeners in each garden expressed a version of the narrative, others did not. This is to say that these 'master-narratives' are implicitly contested through the diversity of people and diversity of experience in the gardens. Moreover, the contradictions between individual accounts and broader community narratives are not only to be expected but are a useful point of reflection for determining the projective power of the master-narratives, the extent to which the narratives have changed through time, and the ways they might change in future.

Across the two gardens, the narrative of resistance encompasses a number of sub-narratives. Two of these sub-narratives are particularly significant as they emerged in multiple ways throughout the research process and evince a commonality across the two sites. The first relates to the occupation of the sites. The second relates to the idea of reclaiming or creating public space.

The occupation of Huerto del Rey Moro in 2004 coincided with both its 'rediscovery' by a group of urban ecologists and architects, and the emergence of a neighbourhood movement - the Association of the Friends of Huerta del Rey Moro (*La Asociación de Amigos de la Huerta del Rey Moro*)[16] – that wanted to protect the neighbourhood's green spaces and oppose their development. The land of Huerto del Rey Moro is owned by the City Hall, however an architectural survey in 2008 found that the site contains a number of important historic, architectural elements; it is therefore unlikely that planning permission will ever now be granted to develop the site. Nevertheless, the narrative of occupation is both readily-apparent and important to the character of the space

Through the period of fieldwork, numerous gardeners and visitors recounted their versions of the origins of Huerto del Rey Moro. These narratives varied in their particulars, but share

[16] The word *huerto* can be translated as either 'garden' or orchard. The word implies food production, whereas a simply recreational space is usually referred to as *un jardin*. *Una huerta*, also translates as an orchard, but is used to refer to a larger space where fruit trees are grown. The initial Association in Huerto del Rey Moro referred to the garden as *una huerta*, which was historically correct, but the space is now referred to universally as *un huerto*.

central themes, emphasising the occupation of space by committed local residents, and well as the creation of green public space in a neighbourhood where it was almost non-existent. The idea of continuing resistance to urban processes of displacement, gentrification, and property development over green spaces, is discussed frequently and openly in the garden. One account of the origins of the project came from Luca, an architect involved in several community-managed projects throughout Seville. He was one of the first occupiers of the space that became Huerto del Rey Moro.

> *Well in 2004 I was involved in a project about empty lots in Seville and we listed a lot of them. With a friend we asked, with some curiosity, "what's behind the wall?" There were a lot of walls in Seville. So, a project arose from that. It was quite interesting, we did some prototypes and made some proposals for the management of those spaces. Meanwhile the owner was not building so meanwhile you could do a lot of stuff temporarily, but not insignificant, around which this activity could be developed… So, one of the spaces we visited was this one. But when we entered before the first occupation, we entered from that door, from the back door. Here there was a wall, you could not see inside* (Luca, Huerto del Rey Moro, May 2016, first participatory video process).

Luca's account goes on to talk about both the potentials of the garden for wellbeing but does not talk explicitly about the processes of resistance, self-organisation, or collective action that dominate day-to-day accounts of the garden. In part this reflects Luca's relationship with the project. He comes here to work, not to be involved in "bureaucracy". But at the same time, it reveals that to Luca, and others, the garden is more significant in terms of the type of space that has been created, as a contrast to much of the wider city, than as a distinct manifestation of self-management or collective effort.

Luca's account also emphasises the way that the space was unused, and yet was inaccessible to the local community. In many instances, the 'walls' and tall buildings that line Macarena's narrow streets are hundreds of years old, materially separating the public streets from the spacious gardens and courtyards of current and former wealthy residents. In spite of a long and well-documented history in the neighbourhood of communal housing and collective artisan workshops, many of these walls have survived to the present day and continue to reinforce dynamics of privacy/exclusion.

Seville has many examples of forms of housing that combine both public and private space. *Corales vecinos* are a common and instantly recognisable configuration across the old parts of the city. They take the general form of a gated door from the street that leads into a shared courtyard, which often includes a well or fountain, around which ten to twenty small homes are placed, sometimes over two stories. Many local residents above the age of retirement, including in the gardens, grew up in the collective culture of *corales vecinos*. However, this form of housing is no longer being built. The *corales* that have survived are now high-demand

historic properties, lacking any sense of community, and unaffordable to the majority of *Sevillanos*. Vestiges of the *corales vecinos* culture, particularly the sharing of semi-public space, still exist in the artisan workshops that can be found throughout the Macarena neighbourhood.

Throughout the Nineteenth and early-Twentieth Centuries, Macarena was known as a working-class district, populated by tile-makers, fishermen and artisans. However, these working-class residents made little material impact on the architectural fabric of the neighbourhood. Perhaps the most famous example in this regard is Casa del Pumarejo, a ten-minute walk from Huerto del Rey Moro. Casa del Pumarejo was a palace built in the late Eighteenth Century. However, after being sold several times, it fell into disrepair. In the Nineteenth Century it became a 'neighbourhood house', occupied by several families that lived in different areas of the large and increasingly-dilapidated building.

Descendants of these families and newcomers lived in the House until the late Twentieth Century, when they were evicted by the local government in anticipation of a redevelopment scheme. The House was saved by a local Cultural Association that campaigned to preserve the House as a community asset. Local struggles for public and communal space are frequently shared and retold by the gardeners in Huerto del Rey Moro. They also collaborate with a wide range of local groups, including the Association of Casa del Pumarejo and local artisan groups on numerous neighbourhood initiatives including workshops, parties, lectures, and theatre.

Another account of the origins of the garden came from a long-term female gardener. While she does not work on a daily basis in the garden, she lives close by, is a regular visitor, and has been involved in the management and monthly assemblies since the garden began.

> *I had many ecologist friends and we found out that there was a beautiful open space of 5000 square metres. However, it was a space that was closed off to the neighbourhood. It had a wall and although it was supposed to be an environmental area in the green zone according to the urban plan it was closed off to the neighbourhood. Therefore, the neighbours decided this didn't make any sense. I remember I used to take my son to the gardens of the park in the very few green zones that we had available here. We felt that we were truly in need of a larger green zone and seeing as we had this 5000 square metre space right there we thought it was a great idea to use it… Well from the moment we entered the park we felt that it was important for this space to be organised and taken care of and managed by the neighbours within our community. Many of us were members of the collective movement and had experience working as a group together before so we all knew each other. We wanted everyone who participated to have an equal voice and opinion and wanted everyone to be able to easily come and join* (Interview with a female gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, May 2017).

Like Luca's, this account also mentions the walls that concealed from the public the space that was to become the garden. However, it also brings in several elements that were not discussed by Luca, such as the importance of a collective, democratic process in establishing the garden; something that this female gardener regularly participates in.

Both accounts raise the importance of the narrative of *occupation*. For some gardeners this was a political act and a deliberate challenge to exclusionary and unused private space in the neighbourhood. For others, the occupation is discussed more in terms of expediency; this was a space that had not been claimed, but which could fulfil the need for green public space for local residents. Both conceptions are part of the narrative of the garden, which is at once unified and contested. This narrative has been important for establishing an identity of the garden, which a diverse population has been able to rally around and support.

In discussing the history of the occupation of the space, local residents frequently brought up historical examples of resistance in Macarena. One story that I was told on multiple occasions was the destruction of Casa Cornelio in 1931, an anarchist meeting place located less than one kilometre from the gardens. The Casa was in fact a room above a bar where communists, anarchists and socialists would meet regularly in the 1920s. It was destroyed by artillery on orders from the Ministry of Interior to quell strike action and unrest in the city. Many local residents also informed me that Macarena was one of only two neighbourhoods in the city (the other being Triana) to resist Franco's forces at the outbreak of the Civil War in 1936.

The collective historical awareness of events is still important in Huerto del Rey Moro today. Whilst there is no attempt on the part of the gardeners to draw any direct or ideological relation to historical actors, common cultural knowledge of these acts of resistance and collective living provides a shared framework, and a language, for understanding and communicating about the garden in the context of the neighbourhood. The portrayal of the garden as a reclaimed, community-occupied space that continues to exist in the face of the threat of eviction is symbolically very important for the identity of the community in and around Huerto del Rey Moro. However, it does not necessarily represent the full reality.

Huerto del Rey Moro exists on what was historically the private orchard of the nearby Casa del Rey Moro (House of the Moorish King). Despite its name, the house was constructed in the late Fifteenth or early Sixteenth Century, long after the Moors had left Seville. Casa del Rey Moro has been listed as a Property of Cultural Interest since 1985 and thus should be protected from development. However, both the house and the garden were scheduled for development into housing in 1987; this proposal was reiterated in the city's 2006 *Plan General de Ordenacion Urbana* (General Urban Plan).

Whilst the garden is technically occupied by the community, and the narrative of occupation is evident in the gardens and repeated to almost every visitor to the space, the community has

never been under direct threat of eviction. From 2006-2010 the garden was part of an educational programme in partnership with local schools. And from 2008-2009 the garden received financial support (approximately €30 000) from the City Hall, as part of its participatory budgeting initiative. This money was used to pay for two supervisors for the children at the site. Additionally, the City Hall has donated two portacabins to the garden, it maintains and pays for the water and electricity supplies, and it has converted the high wall facing Calle Enladrillada into a less obstructive iron fence and gate. In 2016-7 the garden was included alongside other institutionally-recognised community gardens in the report commissioned by the City Hall. Yet there still exists a general wariness within the garden and amongst the community about engaging with the City Hall, given their lack of formal status and insecurity of tenure. Nevertheless, this fragmented history of engagement and patchwork of support from the City Hall demonstrate recognition by the council of the community garden as a legitimate and long-term neighbourhood project.

By contrast, there was no material occupation in Miraflores Sur. Rather there was a political, citizen-led process to pressure the City Hall to demarcate the land that would become Parque de Miraflores, for public use. In the early 1980s local residents discovered that the former flood plain had been designated a no-build zone in the 1960s. However, the land was only accessible by one commercial farmer and nearby housing developers, who used it to dump construction debris. In 1983 the local community began to coordinate the restoration of the former agricultural land (interview with male gardener, Miraflores Sur, May 2016).

The following narrative comes from the first participatory video-making process. Manuel Fernandez is the current Head of the Miraflores Gardener's Association and has been involved with the project since 1992:

> *This has always been agricultural area. Before the council declared it a green zone in the '60s, and even in the '90s we hadn't begun to build the park. Then it was '92 or '93 when we started with gardens. We came, we started with gardens around that house. After it was extended, expanded to those today… We started to draw people to come, more and more people, more and more. It was being accepted by the neighbourhood, and today we have a waiting list. I do not know what else to tell you. Here we practice organic farming. It is an agriculture that the gardener learns when he comes* (male gardener, Miraflores Sur, May 2016, first participatory video process).

This account of the origins of the garden is extremely concise and focuses on the material process. The account jumps from the 1960s to the 1990s without referencing the struggles by the community to gain access to the site in the 1980s. As Head of the Gardener's Association, Manuel's interests and concerns are mostly related to the day-to-day management of the project. This contrasts significantly with an account given by Manuel Lara,

the Head of the Parque de Miraflores Association, who has been involved in the management of the entire park since 1983:

> *The first thing to do was build a park because this was a huge waste dump. And the first priority was to build a park. Of course, then the following projects, on the theme of gardens or the theme of restoring heritage began to appear… The first thing they did was school gardens, for teachers who were unemployed and who could care for children. After this we made the leisure gardens for seniors… There has been a speculative power; [developers] are building where there were previously gardens. So, what have we done to stop this type of speculative power? We heard this was designated a green zone. We have stopped the speculation, and we have restored the heritage of the area, because urban sprawl destroys the sense of place and identity. Without this, we could be in any other neighbourhood, in Seville or New York* (interview with Manuel Lara, Miraflores Sur, May 2016).

This account situates the creation of the park in the broader struggles against the elimination of local heritage and identity, and the struggle to reclaim the public green space to which the community was legally entitled. Throughout the 1980s, decisions regarding the rehabilitation of the park were taken by monthly citizen assemblies, much like in Huerto del Rey Moro today. However due to participant fatigue, given the long history of the park, the assemblies ceased in the 1990s. Many of those involved initially in reclaiming the park are no longer involved in any way. This generational shift is very apparent when talking with people that have been involved since the 1980s and gardeners currently working on the site. The former stress the process of reclaiming public green space and community mobilisation. Whereas the latter talk more about the positive impacts the gardens have in their lives, and everyday challenges such as security and the cost of gardening inputs.

These two narratives represent different ends of a scale depicting the shifting narrative of Miraflores Sur. While the garden was once a radical and highly effective citizen-led initiative to build a public park, over a period of thirty years, much of this energy has been lost. The different emphases across these accounts evidence the contested and dynamic nature of these collective narratives. The central idea of resistance has changed over time and has, for some of the gardeners, been displaced by narratives of community-space, health and wellbeing, amongst others. This is not to say that the narrative of resistance is any less important to the garden as a project, but that the shifts towards less political narratives within the space, contained within the accounts of individual gardeners, is both reflecting and driving change in the narrative of the garden as a project.

Whilst narratives of resistance have played an important role across both sites historically, in Huerto del Rey Moro this narrative is still reproduced today. In Miraflores the narrative of resistance to the suburbanisation of the city has almost disappeared in the garden itself. This could be for two reasons: the first was the generational shift and the settling of the gardening

project under the City's purview, diluting the need for community mobilisation or concerted action through the 1990s. However, it could also be related to the lack of ties to material and architectural reminders of past events. The area now occupied by Parque de Miraflores was outside of Seville as recently as sixty years ago. In Huerto del Rey Moro, the proximity to sites of historical importance for citizen self-organisation, mobilisation and resistance, including Casa del Pumarejo, Casa Cornelio and the Alameda, support and underlie the continuing narrative.

Narratives of Restoration, Rejuvenation, and Heritage

The second master-narrative that underpins both Huerto del Rey Moro and Miraflores Sur relates to the concept of restoration. The idea of restoration is expressed in a variety of ways. The first relates to the recovery and rehabilitation of the disused site. The second relates to the impact of the gardens on the gardeners. The third relates to the restoration of historical ecological infrastructure in the city. The fourth relates to the appropriation and reuse of otherwise discarded materials.

In his account of the beginnings of the garden, Luca emphasised the poor state that the garden was in before the occupation:

> *This was a debris storage, a lot of debris from construction. It was in a really really bad condition. After a few months we knew that a group had occupied it and turned it into a garden. In that time, I got quite involved, we came to help, to take the steel off the ground, the debris off, to make the first part liveable* (Luca, Huerto del Rey Moro, May 2016, first participatory video process).

Like Miraflores Sur, the space that became the community garden was used, potentially illegally, to dump waste from nearby construction projects. The extensive collective labour that was required to rehabilitate the site, not only removing debris, but making the soil productive again, was critical to building a community identity and forging a sense of ownership over the space.

In Miraflores Sur, a similar process began in 1983 to clear the park of construction debris. This community-led process continued for eight years until the City Hall began to support their efforts. This process of material rehabilitation in both gardens feeds into the narrative of restoration in the sense that the gardens represent a successful effort to restore nature within the built urban environment.

This leads to the second, often repeated claim, that the gardens are places of health that rejuvenate and revitalise both the gardeners and visitors to the sites. As one female gardener in Miraflores Sur claimed:

> *The truth is that [the garden] gives you life. It completely changes you. I am glad to get to the garden; out of the house and into the garden. I am new* (female gardener, Miraflores Sur, May 2016, first participatory video process).

The purpose of this Chapter is not to analyse the health and wellbeing impacts of urban community gardens on the gardeners (explored in the next chapter). Rather it is to explore the idea that by continuously sharing and repeating the idea that the gardens are "places of health" (interview with female gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, May 2017), the gardens become significant as "spaces of representation" (Lefebvre, 1991), where abstract ideas become spatial reality for those visiting and working in them. The community narrative of restoration, related specifically health and wellbeing, becomes a lens through which visitors' expectations, emotions and behaviour in the space are shaped and tempered. Many local residents said they visit the garden to be "restored", to "touch the soil" and "be with nature". These expectations in turn contribute towards and reinforce the narrative that the garden is a rejuvenating space.

A further narrative thread that emerged from both gardens relates to the restoration of ancient infrastructure. In Huerto del Rey Moro, gardeners talked frequently and at-length about Moorish systems of water management and urban agriculture. However, despite the importance of this narrative in both justifying the existence of the garden, and informing day to day decisions regarding water management, the narrative bares little relation to local historical events. Rather, gardeners have learned broadly of Moorish water systems and technologies, and surmised that they were, and are, relevant for the ongoing management of the space.

As noted above, the house and the garden were constructed after the Moorish settlers had left Seville, and so it is likely that any Moorish infrastructure that existed on the land was demolished and removed at that time. However, the idea that the gardeners are restoring an ancient Moorish system for water management influences their decisions on a day-to-day basis. Each time this narrative is repeated, and each time actions are taken in the garden according to these contemporary interpretations, it becomes more real and more relevant for the identity of the gardeners and the community of the garden. One gardener explained it as follows:

> *In a city the subjugation of water is very noticeable, especially when the city lives in conditions of drought, brought by poor management, which has nothing to do with the initial vision for water distribution by the Moors or by the Romans… The truth is that food is always plentiful, what is difficult is to share. It was like that when we were working the land. Here we don't work the land, but we can share what we produce* (interview with male gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, May 2016).

These ideas inform decisions such as how to manage drinking, grey, and waste water through the site, as well as the programme of workshops and collective meals using ingredients grown in the garden as well as donations from local cafes and restaurants. These historical links are not based in any one individual memory but rather serve to catalyse and guide the community going forward.

In Miraflores Sur, the concept of heritage is included formally in the stated aims of the Park Association. The garden was originally envisioned to contribute to the restoration of the agricultural heritage of the area. As Raul Puente Asuero stated,

> *The idea is that the garden is not created in any space with no history, no, but the garden does retrieve an agricultural heritage that existed in the territory. And what makes the garden brings heritage back… It is not just a project to produce flowers and vegetables, but a restoration project of cultural identity, the recovery of historical, artistic, recovery of cultural, ethnological, ecological heritage. Now we know how to cultivate, agricultural knowledge. It is a global project more than just planting vegetables in the city, it is a much broader concept* (Interview with Raul Puente Asuero, Miraflores Sur, May 2016).

The idea of restoring heritage is also contained within the parks educational programmes that on one hand partner with schools and provide space for school gardens, and on the other coordinate the long-term restoration of an ancient olive press on the site. The gardeners also make use of a Moorish irrigation system that has existed unused on the site for centuries.

> *They have also taken advantage of all historical infrastructure for irrigation, which comes from the Moorish era. And all this under our feet, has risen to the springs… I think the story, garden and city relationship with citizens is very important here in Miraflores. Because it is not only plants in a city, but has a link with the past, with history, with the Romans, the Arabs. So that there is an evolution to this day* (Interview with male gardener, Miraflores Sur, May 2016).

The idea of continuity of tradition and protection of heritage were important for justifying the creation of the park, however similar to the narrative of resistance, the narrative of restoring agricultural, cultural heritage in the area has become less important to the current group of gardeners.

One final example of how the narrative of restoration plays a role in the gardens is through the reclaiming and reuse of materials. Some of the gardeners approach the idea of reuse from a practical perspective; by reclaiming discarded materials to build structures, the gardeners save money. For example, in Miraflores Sur, the majority of the gardeners have constructed either individual or shared sun-shades or shelters using a variety of reclaimed materials. However, some of the gardeners approach the idea of recycled materials more

philosophically. As the Head of the Cultural Association at Casa del Pumarejo, and long-term visitor to the garden stated,

> *Machines lose their vital functions. They fall out of use. But what can we reuse, rehabilitate, revitalise? Take it apart and organise it in another way* (Interview with Salvador Garcia, Casa del Pumarejo, June 2016).

This philosophy emerged partly as a reaction to the modern 'throwaway' culture, partly as a result of a philosophy that seeks to minimise waste, and partly reflects a more general trend at Huerto del Rey Moro and Casa del Pumarejo, that shared labour is seen as an invaluable activity, and that the long-process of restoring or repurposing waste materials is an important part of community-building and sense of ownership.

The narrative of restoration, rejuvenation and heritage is central to the development of both gardens as dynamic spaces. These shared cultural memories can be grounded in historical processes and or constructed and adopted through repetition and reproduction. Both contribute to the ways that the is space rationalised, used, and experienced by the communities.

The Roles of Narrative in the Social Production of Urban Community Gardens

The purpose of this concluding section is to reflect upon the relationships between these narratives and articulate their role in producing and sustaining urban community gardens. The final question to reflect upon is the way in which, and extent to which, the idea of the right to the city contributes to our understanding of the significance of these narratives.

Lefebvre's spatial ontology allows us to characterise the dynamic relationship between both social and material processes. To some extent, his triad of space offers a framework for understanding the interrelation between individual acts of interpretation, the production and reproduction of collectively-produced, cultural narratives, and the material development of the gardens within the city. On the other hand, the idea of the right to the city emphasises the idea that the gardens are not arenas in which these narratives emerge, but rather they are constituted through the very act of narrative building; Huerto del Rey Moro and Miraflores Sur would not mean what they do to their gardeners and local communities without these narrative trajectories. I return to the contribution of the right to the city below.

The two narratives presented here are in a dynamic relationship, variously supporting and undermining one another. The narratives support one another through the creation of a community in the gardens. In Huerto del Rey Moro, the collective material occupation of the site *by* the community is closely related to the idea that the space should be *for* the

community. The idea of renovating a disused space for community use can be interpreted as both an act of resistance and an act of restoration; each narrative supports the other.

However, the narratives can also undermine one another. For example, the centrality of restoring Moorish architecture in both gardens is a significant and costly undertaking. In Miraflores Sur, the rehabilitation of Moorish irrigation systems and an ancient oil press have only been possible with the substantial involvement of the City Hall. The increasing involvement of City Hall is one of the factors that has diminished the former radical, self-organised energy of the gardens, which manifested in political pressure, and the narrative of resistance around the creation of the Park in the 1980s. (The impact of the relationship between the gardens and the City Hall are discussed in more depth in Chapter 6.)

Moreover, it is important to note that whilst these narratives are prominent in the gardens, this can change slowly but significantly through time, as we can see in the case of Miraflores Sur. As discussed in the introduction to this Chapter, narratives are self-propagating. Each time they are repeated they become more visible and more consequential in shaping the space. Narratives of resistance and restoration are dominant narratives currently; however, it is very likely that the individual shifts in opinion and perspective that prefigure a shift in a broader cultural narrative are already taking place.

It is also important to recognise that many academic sources that engage with Miraflores Sur, including this Chapter, emphasise the historically radical processes that led to its creation. Whilst in some ways this reproduces and prolongs the narrative of resistance in the garden, it does not necessarily reflect the views or priorities of the current community of gardeners. This does not preclude a return to the community-led, self-management model of the 1980s, but it does mean that there is a disjuncture between the narrative of the garden, as a reclaimed public space, repeated by the long-term participants, and the lived experience of those working in the gardens today.

Of course, the two narratives presented here do not represent the only narratives affecting the gardens. The idea that Huerto del Rey Moro, for example, is a space only for young people, as suggested by a visitor to Miraflores Sur, can significantly affect who would come to visit or work in the space. Moreover, narratives of urban development, often informed by global and regional trends, lead public figures and urban policy-makers to rationalise urban space in a particular way. The narrative visions that underlie urban development models are continuously reproduced and challenged through the actions of the City Hall. These decisions are what have led to the existence of the material spaces that were to become Huerto del Rey Moro and Miraflores Sur. The contest between private developers' interests, the City Hall's mandate to protect cultural heritage, and community mobilisation has played a pivotal role in creating the undeveloped urban void that would become the garden.

In Huerto del Rey Moro and Miraflores Sur, narrative plays several important roles in the social production of gardens as unique and dynamic spaces. Firstly, narratives provide a justification for, and are used to legitimise, the actions and work of the gardeners. They support the community's claims to the space and underpin the sense of collective entitlement to green public space in the neighbourhood. These urban gardens develop a symbolic significance, as material sites where abstract and utopian ideas are explored and contested through local-level work, discussion, and practice. The diverse and emergent praxis that characterises Huerto del Rey Moro contributes to a 'community of possibility', where small actions have potentially transformative consequences in the context of contested global narratives. In this sense, the construction of narrative reflects and in turn is influenced by the construction of community. As Galt and colleagues (2014: 135) explain,

> "In the end, people coming together for something greater than the "day-to-day struggle" produces hope about their communities and future, particularly when the transformations, both material and ideological, are visible and meaningful."

Moreover, these narratives enable the community to situate their local actions in the context of broader cultural narratives, whereby every decision taken at the local level can be seen as a microcosm of a broader significant struggle for community-managed green spaces in urban contexts.

> *Any small action of one person has the same value as that of a thousand. It's not about when we do it but why we do it. That's the important thing, the intention* (Interview, Huerto del Rey Moro, May 2017.)

The creation and exchange of narratives enables urban community gardens to become *communicative spaces* (Reason, 2004), which are created when people engage with different knowledges, ways of knowing, and ways of communicating, in recognition of difference. Communicative spaces can be critical and reflexive, where ideas can be collectively formed and contested (Beebeejaun, 2016).

The second significant role of narratives is in creating both real and constructed links to historical events through collective memory. Historical narratives, influenced by material, architectural legacies are re-appropriated and re-imagined by today's gardeners. In Miraflores Sur, the dominant narratives have shifted significantly over time. However, the idea of preserving and restoring heritage in the territory is still very present. In Huerto del Rey Moro, the constructed myths both guide and reflect the priorities of the community.

The third significant role is in contributing to the creation of a community identity. The identity of *hortelanos* (gardeners) is particularly important in this context, implying something in between a hobby gardener, *un jardinero*, and a farmer or farm labourer, *un agricultor/bracero*. This distinct urban identity both reflects and contributes towards the common narrative of urban community gardens in the city. However, the narratives that characterise the gardens,

including narratives of resistance and restoration, also limit the potential beneficial impacts of the gardens, and can be the source of conflict within and between sites.

The particularity and localisation of narratives, for instance, is one of the barriers limiting the efforts to link up and connect different projects, regardless of overarching narratives of sustainability and other urban struggles. For example, whilst there is potentially much common ground between the 'myths' of Huerto del Rey Moro and the importance of heritage in Miraflores Sur, there is little to no contact between the two sites. This is not only down to the issue of narrative, there are significant demographic and political differences as well as physical distance between the two projects. However, the fact that there is not a shared narrative or language to communicate shared values, including of heritage and wellbeing, undoubtedly contributes to each project's isolation. On one hand, narratives can foster a community identity that enhances the connections within a group, at the same time they can increase the otherness of individuals and communities that do not share or engage with the same narratives.

Moreover, as collective social constructions, narratives are slow to emerge and slow to change. This presents a certain inflexibility with regards to how 'new' forms of action or initiatives are interpreted, leading, in the case of Huerto del Rey Moro, to organisational conflict. This issue will be discussed in more depth in Chapter 6. The force of prevailing narratives can in fact limit the capacity of a community to respond critically to new processes, or at the least constrain the interpretation of new and fluid events to their consonance or conflict with existing, internalised narratives.

Neither of these challenges is insurmountable if fully recognised and addressed. The reality is that the narratives in Huerto del Rey Moro and Miraflores Sur are so locally specific in their form and language that, to an extent, they prevent the development of broader and more inclusive networks across the city and beyond. Nevertheless, the purpose of this Chapter has been to outline the various roles played by collective, cultural narratives in the creation and management of Seville's urban community gardens.

In order to return to the central contention of this thesis, that the right to the city offers a way of deepening our understanding of the social and political significance of urban community, it is important to identify aspects of this analysis that could only have come from engagement with the right to the city discourse or are given new significance in light of it. To this end I believe that the right to the city makes two fundamental contributions.

The first comes from Lefebvre's triad of space. Within the critical urban ontology that underpins the right to the city, the narratives that characterise urban community gardens take on both a political and ontological significance within the city. In learning a space, urban inhabitants are generating representations of that space, thus contributing to its social (re)production. For example, each person that forms the idea (or learns) that a particular

street is safe or dangerous, quiet or busy, contributes to the ontological character of that street. Lefebvre (1991) understood the three elements of space to have a continuous, dialectical relationship. Therefore, the ontology of the street (and the lived experience of the street) cannot be distinguished from the knowledge produced through and entailed within *representations* of that street; each contributes to the ontology of the other. The construction and communication of these representations, through narratives and other means, underlies McFarlane's (2011) idea that learning the city is not about exchanging information but about "developing perceptions".

In this way the case of Seville demonstrates how the creation and transmission of narratives can in fact create public space within the city. These spaces are not necessarily public in the sense that they are administered by the State, but rather that they are, to varying degrees, community-managed spaces that have been precluded from speculative forms of capitalist urban development.

Lefebvre himself rejected the idea of narratives. However it is possible that this was a semantic rather than philosophical point. As Eldon (2004: 7) notes,

> "[Lefebvre] was resistant to linear teleological narratives, instead emphasizing the importance of rhythms, the repetitive, cycles and moments."

However, as this Chapter has aimed to demonstrate, the narratives within Huerto del Rey Moro and Miraflores Sur are dynamic, reciprocal, and non-teleological. The challenge for scholars in the urban agriculture discourse is to recognise and respond to the centrality of narrative within and around urban community gardens, not only as a way of understanding ideas, processes, and conflicts within the gardens, but in the very construction of the city, both within the material limits of the gardens and beyond.

Building on this idea, the second contribution of the right to the city comes from the idea that small and discrete urban spaces, such as Miraflores Sur and Huerto del Rey Moro are inextricably connected with the wider city through layers of social and political processes. Amongst these processes, the (re)production and transmission of collective narratives, such as narratives of restoration and resistance, take on a wider significance as processes of collective urban visioning. The urban gardens presented here are not only places where constructive alternative visions of urbanisation and urban space are developed, contested and shared, they are places where these narratives become embodied reality. In the next Chapter I explore the significance of the spatial concentration of collective visioning and political possibility within and around Seville's urban community gardens.

Chapter 5: Realising the Potentials of Urban Community Gardens at Multiple Scales: Impacts, Challenges, and Constraints

> *This is a space that brings balance to me. We decide what we want to do. I want this place to be a mirror to reflect ourselves. This is a place where I can experiment and make mistakes* (male gardener, undisclosed location, June 2017, second participatory video process).

There are a number of factors which variously enable or constrain the potential social impacts of urban community gardens. There also exist a number of challenges that can either threaten the future of urban gardens or have the potential to significantly alter their character. This Chapter contributes to the urban agriculture discourse on the socio-political significance of urban community gardening by examining the actual and potential impacts of urban community gardening in Seville at multiple scales and identifies factors that limit their potential benefits. I also explore the extent to which Lefebvre's characterisations of urban space can help us to better understand and therefore potentially respond to the social and political potentials of urban community gardens.

There is a wide range of academic literature that emphasises the multi-dimensional benefits of urban agriculture. Broadly, this multi-dimensional character has been explored in terms of the environmental, economic, and social impacts (Cohen & Reynolds, 2014; Mougeot, 2005). Scholars have also explored the potential of urban agriculture to contribute to social justice (Chiara Tornaghi, 2012) and collective identity formation amongst the gardeners (Lyson, 2015), and have recognised the potentials of urban agriculture for "growing" communities (Carolan & Hale, 2016).

However McIvor and Hale (2015) rightly argue that much of the literature on the social potentials of urban community gardens focuses too much on the immediate, project level, with little attempt to characterise how the gardens might impact upon political processes, such as participation and direct democracy, at a larger scale. Beyond the literature that explores the socio-political impacts of urban agriculture at the community-level there exists also a wide range of literature from across the global North and South that concentrates on the inter-connected health and social benefits of urban agriculture, typically focused at the level of the individual and/or household. Scholars have also attempted to theorise the impacts of urban agriculture through the lens of Marx's metabolic rift (Dehaene et al, 2016; McClintock 2010). However, there is a significant gap in the research exploring how the micro-level processes in urban gardens – the subjective, emotional, contested, collective and individual – relate to the significance of urban agriculture at the city-level.

At the same time, many scholars have identified the numerous challenges facing urban community gardens. Scholars have identified challenges that constrain urban gardens from realising their socio-political potentials, as well as a wide-range of structural challenges that frequently threaten their very existence. In this Chapter I propose a more systematic way of understanding the challenges facing urban gardens. The purpose of this more systematic approach is not only to clarify the way that we understand the factors constraining the potentials of urban community gardens but to identify strategic opportunities to address these constraints at multiple levels.

In recent years there has been a growing trend towards thinking spatially about the impacts of urban gardens. Some scholars have examined the extent to which the benefits of urban agriculture are distributed throughout the city (Mahbubur, 2014; Wolch et al., 2014). Whilst others, such as Corcoran and Kettle (2015) have explored in greater depth the nature of the space in urban agriculture projects, arguing in particular that allotment sites can become "spaces of potential" to overcome social and ethnic tensions. Elsewhere Galt, Gray and Hurley have identified what they term *subversive and interstitial food spaces* (SIFS), defined as "spaces of production driven by rationalities that diverge from capitalist rationality in one or more respect" (2014: 135). Barron's (2017) article also explores the significance of urban agriculture in the context of Neoliberal urban governance and economic trends, arguing that urban agriculture "[offers] not only the possibilities for activism and socio-political transformation, but an opportunity to "reclaim lived space from the abstract realm of modern capitalism." (Barron, 2017: 1144). In this sense there is a growing discourse around the spatial politics of urban food production. However much of this research either focuses on potentials for transformative change at the level of the garden or looks at the relationship between the garden and the city, without exploring how these processes interact and intersect. This Chapter aims to contribute to the discourse by going beyond the existing literature and examining the nature of the gardens as community spaces, embedded within their neighbourhoods and the wider city.

The addition of Lefebvre is important for two reasons. The first is that his conception of space captures the contested and mutable character of urban gardens, allowing us to explore the ways in which these contests and conflicts might positively influence their impacts at multiple scales. The second is that, beyond his famous triad, Lefebvre's works offer a number of further characterisations of space which are useful in accounting for the current and potential significance of urban community gardens in ways that are not currently reflected in academic literature.

Beyond his famous triad, introduced in Chapters 2 and 4, Lefebvre offered numerous distinctions and further ways of characterising urban space. Lefebvre distinguishes between *isotopias*, *heterotopias*, and *utopias*; "analogous places, contrasting places, and the places of what has no place" (Lefebvre, 1991: 163). In exploring the possibilities within urban community gardens, the notion of heterotopias is particularly useful. The idea of heterotopias

can be said to originate with Foucault, however his formulation is “frustratingly incomplete” (Soja, 1996: 162). For Foucault, “[Heterotopias are] something like counter sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found in the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted” (ibid: 24).

Foucault differentiated between heterotopias *of crisis*, confined to primitive societies, and heterotopias of *deviation* in modern societies. His examples included psychiatric hospitals and prisons; spaces characterised by their deviation from social norms. These are institutionally bounded spaces that become defined by the collective, *deviant* identity of the inhabitants. However Lefebvre’s heterotopia goes further, “by making explicit how much fragmented, mobile, and changing the production of space is” (Cenzatti, 2008: 84).

Lefebvre’s heterotopias are created by, and viable only in the context of, the social relations that constitute them. They are spaces of possibility and change. Within this formulation, urban space is conceived as a complex and fluid construct born out of dialectical tension between forms. Spaces for urban inhabitants socially, spatially, or politically alienated from urban management and governance processes are therefore of the greatest political significance; “It is the very difference of a social group (its marginality) that makes the appropriation of a physical space relevant and gives specificity to the space produced” (Ibid: 86).

This Chapter aims to address three questions. The first is what are the actual and potential socio-political impacts of urban community gardening and at what scales are these impacts most significant? The second is, what are the challenges that constrain these potential impacts? And the third is, how do the spatial politics of urban community gardens contribute to their real and potential socio-political impacts, and to what extent does Lefebvre’s right to the city help us to better understand and articulate these potentials?

In addressing these questions, I aim to contribute to the growing discourse around the social impacts of urban community gardens in a way that contextualises their real and potential significance within a more mobile and dynamic conception of urban space than has currently been attempted. And to propose a more systematic way of characterising the challenges facing urban gardens that constrain their socio-political impacts at multiple scales.

It is important to recognise that the idea of scale is not unproblematic. Since Peter Taylor’s (1982) article first challenged empirical conceptions of scale, geographers have critically examined ‘scale’ as both an epistemological and ontological construct arising from predominantly social processes (Marston, 2000). Accordingly, geographers have increasingly turned their attention to what has been termed, ‘the politics of scale’ (Cox, 1998).

Whilst this critical discourse has effectively problematised scale, scholars have also questioned whether the concept still has value in human geography. Marston et al (2005) argue the concept of scale confuses *size* and *level*, and that conceptions of scale cannot be untangled from implicit asymmetrical binaries, such as global-local. This asymmetry is evident

in globalisation discourses where “the global is often equated with space, capital, history and agency, and the local, conversely, is linked with place, labor, and tradition” (Escobar, 2001: 155).

This is not to reject the concept of scale outright. However, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to engage substantially with this critical discourse. This Chapter uses the term *scale* to differentiate between impacts and challenges at the individual-level, the garden-level, the neighbourhood-level, and the city-level. To distinguish between these levels is not to refer to spatial or jurisdictional boundaries. Rather it is to crudely distinguish between impacts with small, medium, or large numbers of people impacted within the city. In the case of Seville, garden-level impacts potentially affect hundreds of people; impacts at the neighbourhood level potentially affect thousands of people; impacts at the city-level potentially affect tens or even hundreds of thousands of people. In the concluding section of this Chapter I reflect on the extent to which Lefebvre’s conception of space enables us to overcome some of the limitations and issues relating to the concept of scale.

This Chapter draws on the two cycles of participatory video-making as well as qualitative interviews conducted across 2016-17. The Chapter does draw on material and insights from the second participatory video process, which was not focused on gardens but rather on the network of gardeners. However the material and quotations used relate exclusively to Huerto del Rey Moro and do not overlap with the gardeners’ activities in other sites across the city, introduced in Chapter 6.

In order to consider the relationship between urban community gardens and the right to the city it is, of course, essential to explore the assemblage of actors, networks and interactions that occur within and around the gardens. This research project does engage with urban agriculture organisations that operate at the city-level, (the permaculture collective, La Boldina, is introduced in the following Chapter). However, to articulate the significance of urban gardens to actors not currently involved in urban gardening, and particularly to professional urban planners and urban policy-makers, it is important to also focus on the impacts of the gardens as material spaces. This is essential if we hope to make the case that urban gardens have a distinct, even singular, constellation of potentials and benefits, which supports their development in the context of other competing urban land uses.

The Socio-Political Impacts of Urban Gardens

This research explores the idea that most significant impacts relate to the nature of the community space that the gardens embody. Before considering the nature of the space however, it is important to recognise the contribution of the gardens to the health and wellbeing of the gardeners across both sites, understood as an individualised but important precondition of social impact.

In Huerto del Rey Moro and Miraflores Sur, this research found that the gardens have a perceived significant impact on the health and wellbeing of the gardeners. These impacts were also described at the neighbourhood-level. At the individual-level, the gardens were perceived to have a positive impact on both the physical and mental health of the gardeners through both increased physical activity and the ability to spend time in the natural environment. In both Miraflores Sur and Huerto del Rey Moro the gardeners described how gardening improved both their physical and mental health. In Miraflores Sur, many of the gardeners described the contribution of the garden to their on-going physical health.

> *I can assure you that most of the people here are more than sixty years old and many of them are outpatients, sure if they were not here, would be in the clinic* (male gardener, Miraflores Sur, May 2016, first participatory video process).

Whilst others reflected on the contribution of gardening to their ongoing mental health, either as an escape from their daily routine or as a response to mental health conditions such as anxiety:

> *This environment for me is a very important part of my life, for my stability. It is to get out of stress, work, daily routine. Here I'm someone else, I live another way* (Manuel Fernandez, Miraflores Sur, June 2016, first participatory video process).

In Huerto del Rey Moro, the gardeners spoke about the garden as a "place of health" (male gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, June 2016, first participatory video process), however the diverse demographic gave a greater range of responses, some of which echoed the responses of the gardeners in Miraflores Sur, for example:

> *This [place] equals health, development of intelligence, and above all happiness* (interview with female gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, May 2017).

This expresses an embodied notion of wellbeing, experienced through physical and mental processes. However, some gardeners in Huerto del Rey Moro also expressed what I consider to be a *disembodied* sense of wellbeing; a sense that is not confined to one's experience or interpretation, but is altogether more ethereal, more abstract, and less measurable. As one gardener described:

> *[This is] a space that has given us life* (male gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, May 2016, first participatory video process).

The perceived contribution to health and wellbeing is clearly observable at the individual-level, however what is perhaps more significant is the impact that a small public green space can have at the neighbourhood-level. Both Huerto del Rey Moro and Parque de Miraflores are the only green spaces available to many residents in the local community. The number of daily visitors to the sites vastly outstrips the numbers of gardeners working there. One of the

gardeners from Huerto del Rey Moro described how even brief interactions with these spaces can have profound consequences on personal wellbeing in the rest of one's life:

> *When you take care of a garden outside yourself you are also taking care of a garden inside yourself. I think that the labour in the garden has a lot to do with meditation as well. Because we live in a really mental society where there is lot of thoughts going on in our heads all the time. And when you are working with the earth, with plants, it's a moment of peace, and it's a moment when you can see your actions and your essence reflected in the work that you are doing... I feel that my heart has been deeply transformed* (interview with female gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, July 2016).

What is telling is that while some gardeners were conscious of the potential impacts of the garden at the neighbourhood- and city-levels, and actively sought to promote interactions and activities with visitors to the space to this end, others have made conscious decisions to focus on cultivating their own individual wellbeing, as an example to others:

> *I'm not sure if I want to make changes in the city. It's not my purpose really. I want to make my own experience through the things that I consider important to change. Personal change. To create an example of change. My intention is really to have internal change and as a consequence see external change. I take care of myself internally and as a result there is an external effect* (male gardener, undisclosed location, May 2017, second participatory video process).

Overall, the gardens have significant perceived impacts on the health and wellbeing of people that work in them, as well as significant, but less profound perceived impacts on the wellbeing of visitors. However, the number of gardeners is small in the context of the entire urban population, and the regular visitors to the gardens come overwhelmingly from the immediate vicinity. Therefore, the gardens have little perceived impact on health or wellbeing at the city-level. This research finds that the more significant social impacts do not necessarily relate to the activity of urban gardening, but to the nature of the space that these activities produce.

Both Huerto del Rey Moro and Miraflores Sur can be characterised as spaces that, consciously or unconsciously, create opportunities for experimentation, and for new forms of social engagement and organisation. The gardeners of Huerto del Rey Moro stressed the role the gardens play in creating and sustaining a community through a number of distinct mechanisms. Firstly, the gardens act as a public forum for public discussion, debate, and interaction. Specifically, the garden has become both the arena for and means through which community discussions are played out. The garden serves as a site through which diverse groups are able to contest ideas. As one female gardener explained,

> *There have been groups of people who have encountered some sort of a conflict. They've felt left out. As a result of this, those who have felt hurt by this conflict have*

> *taken a stand and decided not to let their own ideas and objectives be skewed. They go to the garden and are able to express that* (interview with female gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, June 2017).

The garden provides not only a context, but also a form and a language for more abstract discussions within the community. For example, discussions about allocating space within the garden for different activities has become a means through which the community engage in debates regarding individualism and the commons. The discussion as to whether Huerto del Rey Moro should include individual plots was ongoing for more than a year. What began as a practical conversation about the best way to manage their limited space became a more fraught and political discussion about whether an individual or collective approach was a more effective way to manage a site or a project. These discussions became a language and a form through which different visions for urban management were tested and contested.

Secondly, the networks created within the gardens themselves attract new members, snowballing into a larger, and more spatially diverse group. At one level this occurs simply through the creation of an inclusive and inviting green space. Huerto del Rey Moro posts a blackboard with weekly activities all of which are free to attend, including workshops, meals, talks and other events. Additionally, members of the local community can host their own events in the garden, a service not provided by the City Hall:

> *Twice a month, we grant the right for any organisation or assembly (as long as it's not a private corporation) to use this space for their own activities, whether it be for fundraising or whatnot. This has been a great gift for Seville as whole. The city council in general doesn't generally grant this which is ridiculous in my opinion; people not being able to take advantage of the space in their own communities. There are many groups that have wanted to organise cultural activities and fundraisers and now they have a space to do so* (interview with female gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, June 2017).

Events such as this are restricted to twice per month in order to reduce the amount of litter produced in the garden and also to ensure that it is available for the majority of the year as a public space. In Miraflores Sur, gardeners host festivals twice a year where they cook and share produce from the gardens; inviting local residents and community members to join, regardless of whether they hold a plot or regularly visit the gardens. At another level a community of people has grown around each garden, attracted by the way the existing community functions. As one gardener explained,

> *When you see a person, who is actively working to care with generosity and altruism, one understands that one is obligated in some way, or one is invited to participate, to collaborate* (interview with a male gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, September 2016).

Third is the identifiable relationship between the development of a material space, and the consolidation of a community through collaboration and shared labour.

> *Well, there is an obvious transformation, the environment and plant space has been transformed… That is to say, there were few varieties of species, and now a lot. Then we can also say that in terms of human relations, we have generated more links between people* (interview with a male gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, May 2016).

The myriad activities in the garden, including planning and building infrastructure, helps foster both a sense of ownership and a commitment to the space in the community. What might be perceived as material disorganisation to someone entering the garden for the first time, is actually evidence of a conscious strategy to be continuously collectively working on a variety of projects within the garden. This is most evident with the children's play area, which contains a variety of apparatus constructed on site. At the monthly assembly in September 2016, the question was raised as to whether it would not be faster and easier to purchase new equipment for the children out of funds raised from selling food and drinks at parties over the summer. However, the decision was collectively taken that it was more important to build the apparatus themselves, preferably using reclaimed materials, in spite of the slower delivery and requisite labour.

Gardeners from Huerto del Rey Moro identified a lack of spaces in the city for *convivencia* (living together). Seville is famous for its tapas culture and the city has countless plazas that are full at lunchtimes and through the evening with a diverse range of local people. The plazas are important social spaces for the majority of *Sevillanos*. However they represent a particular form of commercialised space in which the public need to purchase and consume food in order to be able to sit in them. The plazas are not owned by the bars and restaurants that surround them, however they cannot be considered public spaces as their use is informally governed and managed by these small businesses. The one exception to this rule is *Alameda de Hercules*, which is so large that much of the area is sufficiently away from bars and restaurants that it can be used freely, although not to the same extent as the gardens; residents cannot erect structures, for example.

In Huerto del Rey Moro, gardeners also spoke about the contrast between the 'individualising' city, and collective, cooperative processes in the garden. Some spoke about the potential of the garden to "build consensus across different politics" (Interview with male gardener, June 2016). To this end Huerto del Rey Moro uses a combination of participatory workshops and deliberative democracy to build consensus amongst its users.

In Huerto del Rey Moro the community of gardeners is significant for the way that it provides material space for the discussion and debate of concepts, ways of decision-making, and ways of working that are uncommon, and frequently counter to, practices in wider society. (That this process is reflected materially and spatially in the gardens will be discussed in more depth in

Chapter 6). This deliberative space is central to the interpretation of urban gardens as heterotopias, as spaces of multiple possibility, where contested ideas, approaches and philosophies coexist.

For the gardeners of Huerto del Rey Moro, the prevalence of collective decision-making and participatory democratic processes both normalises and reinforces them. After fourteen years of monthly assemblies, the practice of horizontal, consensus decision-making, as opposed to decisions taken by vote, is no longer seen as radical or uncommon; it has become naturalised within the community. For both regular participants in the project, as well as to visitors to the garden from elsewhere in the city, this normalisation of a radical approach to urban space, urban ecology, and democratic decision-making can not only raise awareness of important issues, but inspire broader societal change through exposure to viable, radical alternatives to prevailing political, urban processes. This was identifiable in both Miraflores Sur and Huerto del Rey Moro:

> *Here you change your way of thinking. You are in the city, you come here, and fifteen minutes later, you've changed your way of thinking* (male gardener, Miraflores Sur, first participatory video process, June 2016).

> *People come here, every person comes with a purpose, with different formations. And there are more people coming with different intentions. Let's see how we can share this and extrapolate to other places or to create networks* (interview with male gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, May 2017).

This concentration of diverse and subversive ideas regarding nature and self-organisation in turn has “inspired a lot of enthusiasm for change” (interview with male gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, June 2017). The diversity and energy of the Huerto del Rey Moro community means that it has become spatially significant within the neighbourhood. The impacts of the garden extend beyond its immediate vicinity as increasing numbers of visitors are exposed to and learn from the gardeners’ ethos. This contributes to the idea that the urban garden is more than a material project, it is a dynamic social construct in continuous dialogue and exchange with the wider city. As one gardener noted,

> *Many people see a garden, but I see a place for dialogue, where you share knowledge, where you experiment, well yes you can also eat, but it is more of a mental space than a physical space for me. Because here happen things that in a normal space would not* (male gardener, first participatory video process, Huerto del Rey Moro, May 2016).

In Miraflores Sur, the gardeners did not speak in terms of the transformative potentials of urban gardening. Rather the positive impacts were framed in terms of the individual gardeners. This reflects the issue identified in the previous Chapter, by which the collective, subversive energy that led to the park being established has largely dissipated. This is not to

say that gardeners are not describing profound “changes of being” (Heron & Lahood, 2013), but rather that the scope and potential of such transformations is limited by the number of available plots within a bounded area.

In Huerto del Rey Moro by contrast, the gardeners talk openly and often about the connections between the garden and “transformation” at multiple scales, but their use of the term needs to be unpacked. On one hand, *transformation* is used by the gardeners to talk about individual transformations, and on the other hand the term is used to describe the potential impacts of these ‘transformations’ on the wider world. For example, some gardeners emphasise the relationships between the personal-emotional impacts of gardens at the individual- and community-levels:

> *How I live in the garden and what it gives me personally, because to me this giving me many things on many levels. Both physical and earthly and spiritual, emotional, psychological. It is changing me a lot, very fast. It is making me understand, understand me, and understand other people who are in a situation similar to mine* (male gardener, undisclosed location, May 2017, second participatory video process).

Whilst others emphasised potential impacts of these transformations at a greater level:

> *The world is changing. Our hearts are changing. And what changes internally implies a change externally as well. And the opportunities don’t stop here* (male gardener, Hinojos, May 2017, second participatory video process).

For some of the gardeners, these transformations are consciously radical:

> *One of the other reasons that I am here in Huerto Rey Moro is because I consider myself a revolutionary. I think we can change reality. I think we can build a better place to live and I think we can give back to Earth what we are taking out of her* (interview with a female gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, July 2016).

Whilst in other instances, particularly for the retired gardeners of Miraflores, gardening is more about finding a peaceful space, where people can avoid thinking or talking about political or philosophical ideas and work manually in a tranquil environment. Sometimes the idea of transformation is related to processes of conscientisation, whereas in other instances it is related more closely to direct action. This contrasting engagement with the idea and the politics of transformation does not necessarily imply that the gardeners in Miraflores Sur are less politically-engaged than the gardeners of Huerto del Rey Moro. Rather it implies that there exist different modes of political engagement, and that the gardens do not represent to the same extent as in Huerto del Rey Moro, sites of political action.

In summary, the idea of transformation is both implicitly, and in some cases explicitly, embodied in the gardeners’ praxis. However, their engagement with the idea is unsystematic

and unfocused, which contributes to a lack of tangible change in the social, economic and political structures that the community claim to resist.

It is useful at this point to return to the question posed in the introduction to the Chapter, whether these urban gardens pose a distinctive set of transformative potentials in the city; what, for example, distinguishes their health benefits from urban sports grounds, or the horizontalism of Huerto del Rey Moro from other urban social projects such as Casa del Pumarejo. Without answering this question in full at this point, there are three pathways to transformation that I argue are distinct to urban community gardens.

The first is reconnecting urban inhabitants to the ecological materiality of the city. In accordance with arguments made by urban political ecologists such as Kevin Morgan (2015) and Nathan McClintock (2010: 202), urban agriculture can "re-establish a conscious metabolic relationship between humans and our biophysical environment by reintegrating intellectual and manual labour." Some scholars have argued that such activities can contribute to mending the metabolic rift, understood as "the break in the ecological exchange between humans and the natural environment (Tornaghi et al, 2015).

The cases of Huerto del Rey Moro and Miraflores Sur do not represent a transformation to the extent of 'mending' the metabolic rift. But they do represent material spaces where the actions and efforts of the gardeners to reconnect with the city's ecological underpinnings are made public and visible. Urban gardeners can interact with and directly, visibly and meaningfully impact on the very ecological systems that support urban living, but which most urban inhabitants are alienated from.

The second distinct, potentially transformative impact of urban community comes from their organisational cultures that, implicitly or explicitly, promote both organisational and material experimentation and innovation. In the case of Huerto del Rey Moro these innovations are evident to any visitor to the garden, in Miraflores they are less immediately evident but no less present. The lack of close institutional oversight, varying degrees of self-governance, and the importance of time and energy inputs over financial inputs, all contribute to a culture of participation, coexistence and collective decision-making. Whether the decision is taken to establish a hierarchical form of decision-making or maintain horizontal, participatory assemblies, this is a form of decision that is rare in other dimensions of urban living.

In gardens such as Huerto del Rey Moro, the transformative impact of the gardens is not necessarily the form of collective self-management that characterises the garden. Rather it is the way that the garden has enabled and contained a process by which this radical approach to self-governance becomes normalised and naturalised. These radical visions for self-governance can emerge from many places, but the inherent nature of urban community gardens makes them particularly apposite.

Thirdly and finally, for characterising the distinct potentials of urban community gardens it is useful to draw on the idea of the right to the city. Perhaps more than any other spaces in Seville, the urban community gardens are defined, contested, made and remade by the continuous and dynamic dialogue between material and social practices. As Lefebvre argues, all urban space can be understood as a composite of three dimensions, the lived, the perceived, and the conceived. However in urban community gardens this dialogue is ever-present and imminent.

In urban community gardens, including both Huerto del Rey Moro and Miraflores Sur, small actions such building a fence, planting flowers, or creating a pathway are not only critical for reconnecting the gardeners with the underlying urban ecology, they are producing (and projecting distinct visions of) the city. In this way we can interpret the everyday actions and decisions of urban gardeners as self-managed, often spontaneous, modes of production of the city. Public or private, productive or reproductive, inclusive or exclusionary? In urban community gardens, perhaps more than any other urban land use, the nature of the space can be continuously, materially and socially negotiated, not as a product, but as an urban commons (Eizenberg, 2012; Linn 1999). I continue this discussion in the final section of this Chapter, below.

In spite of a vibrant and active community in and around both Miraflores Sur and Huerto del Rey Moro, the city as a whole reflects broader urban trends in Western Europe regarding the commodification and privatisation of public space, the prevalence of industrial food systems, and the decreasing role of local government in urban governance. The question then becomes whether the capacity of the gardens to contribute transformative change at the city-level is constrained by their relatively small scale, or by another set of factors that limit their potential impacts.

Challenges Facing Urban Community Gardens in Seville

This section outlines the primary challenges in the gardens as outlined by the gardeners in Huerto del Rey Moro and Miraflores Sur. The section argues that whilst many gardeners describe the transformative potential of the gardens, the scale and significance of these transformations is severely constrained by both internal tensions and the prevailing logics of urban development and urban management in Seville. This section outlines some of the primary challenges identified by urban gardeners in Seville that constrain their socio-political impacts. I present these challenges according to the following typology:

Internal Material Challenges	Internal Process Challenges	Internal Socio-cultural Challenges
External Material Challenges	External Process Challenges	External Socio-cultural Challenges

Table 3. *Typology of challenges facing urban community gardens in Seville*

Each of these challenges makes it in some way more difficult to achieve the aims of the gardeners in each of the gardens. These aims are diverse. When asked about challenges, some gardeners emphasised challenges in managing the space, whilst others spoke about ways that broader institutional and cultural trends limited the scaling up and networking of similar initiatives. Some of these challenges are more significant than others in constraining the potential impacts of the gardeners at various levels. This section argues that the challenges that constrain the most potentially transformative impacts of the gardens can be categorised as internal and external process and socio-cultural challenges.

Internal challenges relate to issues facing the urban gardens that are contained either within the physical boundaries of the site, the group of gardeners that work on the site, or the community that visits or otherwise uses the space. External challenges relate to processes outside of the material gardens, and the network of people that use them. These categories are not necessarily exclusive, but rather they indicate the level at which the gardeners perceive the challenge, and thus frame potential responses to the challenges.

Material challenges relate primarily to the day to day issues that concern gardeners, making it more difficult to carry out their planned activities, and potentially making people less willing to spend time or put work into the space. Material challenges relate to physical inputs and infrastructure including water and land. Process challenges relate to the organisational, procedural, and institutional dynamics that variously enable or constrain the impact of urban gardens. Socio-cultural challenges relate to the ways that broader cultural norms, shaped by economic and political processes amongst many other factors, manifest both within the gardens themselves and as societal attitudes that facilitate or hinder the positive impacts of the gardens at the neighbourhood and city levels. Within these categories I reflect on the reasons why the challenges have been expressed in the way they were, and also on why some challenges that are frequently identified in other cities do not appear to be significant to the gardeners in Seville.

Material Challenges

The issue of internal material challenges came through most strongly in Miraflores Sur. Many gardeners are concerned about lack of security at the site. For many years after their inception the gardens were completely open within the park, which closes its doors to the public overnight. However, fences were installed some years ago around the vegetable gardens, which operate on a different timetable to the rest of the park. In spite of these measures, the security is an ongoing concern for many of the gardeners. As one female gardener explained,

> *There was a guard before, we were more vigilant, now there are more robberies. It is not controlled or monitored by the authorities, no such cooperation as there was before... Now you arrive to find that they have stolen things* (female gardener, Miraflores Sur, June 2016, first participatory video process).

Whilst there have been instances of vandalism in recent years, and the gardeners speak frequently about the need for surveillance, especially since there is no longer anyone living on site since the City Hall removed funding, there is little material evidence that the problem is ongoing or widespread. However, the desire for more security does impact on the ways that the gardeners feel about the space. As one male gardener described,

> *So, it is hopeless situation and I feel like throwing in the towel, being sick of daily effort and then not get anything* (male gardener, Miraflores Sur, June 2016, first participatory video process).

In Huerto del Rey Moro, there have also been on going instances of vandalism. The garden is locked at night, however a large number of neighbours have a key to the gates and it is not uncommon to find it open late at night. However, this is not perceived by the gardeners to be a significant challenge, rather, for some of the gardeners at least, it provides motivation to reach out and include a more diverse community in the garden:

> *People would come and leave the bathrooms completely filthy. Parents would throw birthday parties for their children and destroy the orchards. This would cause frustration for many people in the assembly. So much so that some eventually left. This, in turn, caused an effect on the assembly. At times, we could feel an empty space. There also came a point when many young people started frequenting the orchard…. So times like these were very hard on us. One of the problems for us was trying to connect with these kids and incorporate them into the movement* (interview with female gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, May 2017).

On one hand the contrast in perceptions of security between the gardeners of Miraflores Sur and Huerto del Rey Moro may relate to the extent to which individual gardeners are impacted by vandalism. On the other hand it may relate to the anticipated norms of the space. With the

exception of a small number of communal areas, Miraflores Sur is entirely subdivided into individual plots (*parcelas*). Whilst there are many instances of sharing work across the gardens, each individual gardener has a sense of ownership and responsibility for their plot. It therefore follows that the individuals will feel aggrieved, even targeted, by instances of vandalism to a greater extent than in Huerto del Rey Moro, where responsibility and sense of ownership are more widely distributed. In 2017 in Huerto del Rey Moro, the gardeners created a number of individually-managed raised beds (*bancales*). During the periods of fieldwork there were no instances of vandalism affecting these raised beds and so it is not possible to determine whether gardeners would react in ways comparable to the gardeners of Miraflores Sur.

The other potential explanation of the contrasting perceptions of security as a material challenge comes from gardeners' expectations of the site, which in turn relate to each garden's specific transformative potentials. In Miraflores Sur, the majority of the gardeners have applied, through a formal application process, to become members of an existing project. In taking over a plot of land they agree to abide by existing rules of the site. These responsibilities imply corresponding duties on the part of the project, including responsibility for the security of the site. In Huerto del Rey Moro, there do exist 'rules' for the site, but they are continuously and publicly renegotiated by the gardeners both within and outside of the monthly assemblies. In Huerto del Rey Moro the gardeners' sense of ownership of the project stems in part from the ways that people can become part of the community, and thus 'owners' of the space, by visiting and working in the gardens, rather than applying formally to participate in an existing project. There is not an expectation from the gardeners that anyone outside of the community is responsible for the security of the site. These contrasting project structures correspond to specific, potential social and political impacts; to be a gardener in Huerto del Rey Moro is to participate in participatory democratic processes, which have the potential to build capacity for and naturalise, community-led self-management. In Miraflores, the issue of security reflects the Liberal rights-culture in wider society, whereby the rights of the gardeners are perceived to be guaranteed by an external body; either the project's management hierarchy, or ultimately the State.

Finally, it is interesting to note that, across both gardens, gardeners do not speak about the lack of land available for urban agriculture in the city as an external material challenge. One possible explanation for this is that, in Huerto del Rey Moro in particular, efforts to scale up and scale out initiatives that began in the garden rarely take on an explicitly agricultural focus. One group of gardeners from Huerto del Rey Moro, called *La Boldina*, does engage increasingly at a much broader scale, across the city. However, beyond specific collaborations to make gardens with partner organisations, and isolated instances of guerrilla gardening, their efforts are put into public education and workshops, theatre, lectures, advocacy, and activism. In this way, the extension of the garden's ethos does not require

more available land, but rather the gardeners translate the energy and philosophy of the garden into new modes of engaging with the city. I return to this issue in Chapter 7.

Process Challenges

Gardeners from both sites identified a number of both internal and external process challenges. In Miraflores, gardeners identified a lack of young people that take up plots in the space. This means not only that there is a lack of diversity in the site, but also there is no opportunity to work with or train a new generation of urban producers. This challenge has become particularly significant since funding for the school gardens programme was cut back substantially following the 2007-8 financial crisis.

Longer term gardeners and affiliates of the project have identified citizen burnout as a significant factor in limiting the social and political impacts of the gardens. Whilst the park and gardens were established with a great degree of citizen participation, the participatory elements of the project have reduced significantly over the years. As a visitor to the garden stated,

> *We have had problems because, of course, the model is that a project of this magnitude depends on citizens too... The will is not infinite... Of course, here the main difficulty is that this project has been created, built and maintained by citizens. And there comes a time when goodwill is difficult to maintain* (interview with male associate of the garden, Miraflores Sur, May 2016)

In a sense the energy and community-led process that led to the creation of the gardens has become decoupled from the material reality. The older generation of mobilised residents is increasingly absent both from the gardens and the management of the whole park. This decoupling causes a range of other issues related to the ongoing management of the project.

> *The current problems come from the fact that it has been done by citizens. That has some advantages, but also has some difficulties, right? Because citizens are exhausted. A project that takes five years or ten years is ok. But when projects start to be 25 years, 30 years old, people get tired and exhausted, and you have to change management models* (interview with male visitor, Miraflores Sur, May 2016).

By contrast in Huerto del Rey Moro, the management of the project and the material space are still closely linked, relying as they do on the ongoing energy and commitment of gardeners and local residents. However, gardeners are cognizant of the potential issues that a decline in energy or commitment could have in future, as one gardener put it, “If that energy isn’t directed at something concrete it could eventually get lost” (interview with male gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, June 2016). And as another garden explained:

> *The challenge is to keep it going. It is based on a few people and their life. If a person is missed another should step in… it's a challenge, because when one of these people miss, you see if the seed you planted with your action is sprouting and another person will keep doing it. When you go away, everything could die here… Well those individuals are teaching and showing with their work, the path. So it is the duty of the others to pick up the ball* (male gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, May 2016, first participatory video process).

Many gardeners identified the more immediate internal process challenge of balancing the ongoing, participatory and inclusive nature of the garden, with effective progress towards improving and managing the space. This challenge is further compounded by the transitional nature of many of the long-term gardeners in the space. Some of the people that spend the most time in the garden split their time between Seville and other cities, in Spain and in other European countries. This makes planning and carrying out tasks in the garden difficult to manage effectively:

> *It's a problem because there are a lot of people coming in and coming out. Who is going to be here, who's not going to be here. You come here and you don't know what to expect. The work you started yesterday, whether someone is going to finish it. Perhaps you come here and the person you were working with is not coming and you have to do it on your own. Or if someone is alone and needs help. It makes the level of uncertainty really big* (male gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, May 2016, first participatory video process).

The internal management of the space also depends on the will of the gardeners to work to resolve internal tensions and occasional hostility within the group, as well as between existing and prospective gardeners:

> *We began having trouble with too many people gardening in the orchard. We felt that at times they lacked respect when they came to the orchard. This was meant as an open space for people to use, to experiment. While some were open to learn, others were not. This began causing a hostile environment. Some people in the neighbourhood began saying 'I don't want to go to the orchard because if you don't do things a certain way then they'll ridicule me and embarrass me'… I even began limiting my involvement in the orchard. I didn't want to have to act as a social worker* (interview with female gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, May 2017).

Some gardeners in Huerto del Rey Moro interpreted these tensions as symptomatic of a lack of commitment on the part of the community and local residents to the ethos of the garden (female gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, June 2016, first participatory video process). However, this is counter to the idea of an inclusive space that is open to different capacities,

interests, and levels of participation, and further alienates groups of gardeners from one another.

In 2017 this growing feeling that some gardeners were far more committed than others to the project led to a group of gardeners splitting off from Huerto del Rey Moro and starting to work in other sites around the city. This group became the focus of the second participatory video process, conducted in 2017. The details of this split will be discussed in more depth in Chapter 6. Within this new group however, the challenge of balancing effective organisation with an inclusive approach was still apparent. As one gardener explained,

> *Now, although we are much more organised. But I feel that the group is much more closed and less inclusive… I'm not saying it's closed off I'm simply saying it's less open* (male gardener, La Boldina, June 2017, second participatory video process).

Finally, some of the gardeners have also identified the challenge of incorporating increasing numbers of people into the garden's management processes. The horizontal structure that characterises the garden is dependent, in part, on long-standing personal relationships. Whilst the assemblies are not without conflict and debate, the fact that many of the same people share and work in the space, and live in the neighbourhood, creates opportunities for encounter and interaction outside of the assemblies. These tacit forms of engagement are critical for mitigating disputes and overcoming internal process challenges.

In many ways these internal process challenges are an inherent part of a diverse community project. They both support and undermine the transformative potentials of the urban gardens. On the one hand, the difficulty in managing a long-term participatory initiative relies on passionate and committed individuals, which helps to foster a profoundly diverse space. However, on the other hand, this form of organisation can create internal conflicts and management challenges that limit the scope of activities carried out by the group and dissuade potential new participants from joining the community.

In addition to the internal process challenges, gardeners from both sites identified a number of external process challenges that relate primarily to engaging with formal institutional actors, and local residents, as well as the impacts of City Hall politics on urban garden projects.

Of all the urban gardens in Seville, Miraflores Sur has the longest and most varied relationship with the City Hall. After community efforts to develop the Parque de Miraflores were finally recognised by the City, the local government invested significantly to develop and maintain infrastructure in the park. This was combined with substantial investment in education and cultural programmes centred on Miraflores Sur gardens. Subsequent changes in the nature of this support have impacted significantly on the management of the garden. The management hierarchy expressed frustration at the changing levels of support brought about by electoral cycles; the Association must build new relationships with each new administration (interview with the Head of the Park Association, Miraflores Sur, June 2016).

On the other hand, long term changes in support have created an atmosphere of uncertainty around the project and the feeling that it is “a fragile model” and “a project in jeopardy.” As a local academic explained,

> *The politicians say, "Now I will give more money", "Now I will give less money", "Now there is no subsidy", "Now there a subsidy". That cannot work well, that is a very weak model. This has to be a structure* (interview with Raul Puente Asuero, Miraflores Sur, June 2016).

The long-term trend from the mid-1990s has been a steady reduction of funding and investment in the gardens. As one male gardener put it, “we have been orphaned” (Miraflores Sur, May 2016, first participatory video process). This funding was largely made by grants rather than permanent investment in the project. This model of funding is inherently unstable. And as the Head of the Gardeners’ Association argued,

> *This grant model must be changed to a model where the council is committed to maintaining jobs for years and there is a stability in the projects, school gardens, the gardens for adults, itineraries, that not dependent on political changes or at least not dependent on the will of the community* (male gardener, Miraflores Sur, June 2016, first participatory video process).

In Huerto del Rey Moro, until very recently, there was no relationship between the garden and the City Hall. Gardeners recognise that their lives are impacted significantly by changes to the ruling party in government (male gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, May 2016, first participatory video process), but these changes did not impact directly on the garden. Huerto del Rey Moro was included for the first time alongside other urban gardens. However, at the time of writing there was no direct relationship between the City Hall, and the Huerto del Rey Moro assemblies. This is in spite of repeated attempts to contact and work more closely with the council by a small number of the gardeners.

In the past, Huerto del Rey Moro has received funding from the City Hall as part of its 2008 participatory budgeting programme. This money only lasted until 2010. However, its removal did not have the same destabilising effect on the garden that it has had in Miraflores Sur. In part, this is because the relatively smaller level of investment by the City Hall was not sufficient to create permanent roles that might replace the voluntary, community-led management structures in the garden. The assemblies had not become dependent on City Hall funding and so removing the funding did not have a significant negative impact. However, a number of gardeners have also identified the impact of an overall lack of investment in park maintenance and environmental services by the City Hall, leading to the increasingly poor condition of green spaces, trees in particular, throughout the City.

Gardeners from Huerto del Rey Moro have also recognised the challenge of integrating the garden into the neighbourhood. In part this means building networks and reciprocal

relationships with like-minded people and projects across the city, but it also means building relationships with diverse groups that perhaps avoid such radical social projects. One gardener described the need to create “strips of connectivity” throughout the neighbourhood. This challenge significantly affects the potentials of the garden for transformative change; the idea that transformative ideas about urban space, ecology and direct democracy can be perceived as *too* radical, even antagonistic, towards some groups residents in the city.

In summary, the external process challenges are more critical to Miraflores Sur than Huerto del Rey Moro. It is very likely that the decreasing levels of horizontal participation in Miraflores Sur were partly a result of the direct involvement of city hall and subsequent changes in the relationship. This significantly curtails the transformative potentials of the gardens as diverse community-managed spaces. In Huerto del Rey Moro, we see the greater impact of internal process challenges that result from long-term horizontal structure. These challenges make internal processes slower and more difficult to manage. However overall the debates, tensions and contestations that characterise their internal processes ultimately contribute to the diversity and collective production and community ownership of the space.

Socio-Cultural Challenges

There are a number of economic, social and political processes that impact significantly on the gardens. These trends manifest simultaneously at multiple levels, including within the gardens themselves. These processes significantly impact the attitudes and values of the gardeners and the local community, variously enabling and constraining their transformative potentials.

In Miraflores Sur, gardeners did not specifically identify any socio-cultural challenges to the ongoing management of the gardens. However, a number of potential challenges were identified by gardeners from Huerto del Rey Moro that visited Miraflores Sur on a number of occasions as part of the first participatory video process. These observations in turn caused some of the participants to reflect on the situation in Huerto del Rey Moro.

The primary internal socio-cultural challenge related to the ways in which individualism is expressed within the gardens. As described above, Huerto del Rey Moro has been consciously constructed as a collective, communal project. However, such collectivism is often in conflict with the social and political individualism, associated with neoliberalism, in the wider city. As one female gardener explained:

> *[It has been] difficult in the sense that many of us weren’t used to coming together and organising in order to obtain a common goal. Society in general isn’t really used to this type of work. For the most part people are used to an ‘every man for himself’ type of mentality* (interview with female gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, June 2017).

This naturalised individualism can make it difficult to communicate within the garden, and act as a barrier to consensus decision making:

> *I think the problem today is that there is much individualism. So that we sometimes block communication, we do not reach agreements. And sometimes we don't express important issues because we are not comfortable expressing them, because they can disturb others or can create differences of opinion, they prevent us from reaching consensus, and consensus across different politics* (male gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, May 2016, first participatory video process).

And as one of the participatory video-makers described,

> *Well the process in Miraflores is much different than here. They created magnificent orchards. But it was a very individualistic mentality. 'I have my own plot and I will eat only what I grow'. Here the people who join the assembly are people who truly value this collective action and organisation. I know that this process that we've established doesn't depend on me or other leaders* (interview with male gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, June 2017).

In Huerto del Rey Moro, the idea that they are contending individualism through their activities is powerful and often repeated within the community. However, it may also be the case that the idea of individualism has become a slur used within internal political processes, with different sides of a debate accusing the other of being individualistic over a contested issue. For this reason, the manifestation of cultural individualism within the garden should not necessarily be understood as a barrier for transformative, collective change, but another indicator of the diverse community that constitutes the space.

More significant limitations to the potential of urban gardens at multiple scales arise from the external socio-cultural trends that constrain their impacts socially, politically and spatially within the city. Again, the issue of individualism was proposed by numerous gardeners as one reason why more people do not engage with the garden, or other similar protective projects.

> *Just like a person who lives in a castle and has a moat. They live well in their own community, but they have no clue what happens on the outside. They have the security of their own homes* (female gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, May 2017, second participatory video process).

This form of individualism refers not only to Neoliberal ideas of individual enterprise and responsibility, but to more profound social processes of alienation and isolation. This represents a potentially significant challenge for urban community gardens to reach their transformative potentials, implying that not only are many urban inhabitants not interested in engaging with community projects, but that prevailing social, political and economic trends impair their capacities to do so.

Whilst some urban community gardens are contesting this logic through their collective approaches, they are unequipped to address the broad and powerful political and economic drivers, operating at multiple scales, that threaten collective and 'communalist' (Bookchin 1985) mind sets. As one gardener noted,

> *Man, well in the city there's lots of opportunities of turning spaces into gardens. The climate allows for it. But that vision is something that the general population doesn't have yet* (male gardener, undisclosed location, June 2017, second participatory video process).

A further challenge identified by the gardeners is perhaps more significant to urban gardens than other community projects is widespread ignorance about food systems, that stems from the way people have become alienated from their food systems. Many people in Western European cities have little knowledge, and little interest, about how or where their food is produced, or under what conditions. As House and Figueroa (2015: 510) persuasively argue,

> "For urban dwellers in the heart of the industrialized world – primarily food consumers whose histories and articulations with advanced capitalism have produced a far more alienated relationship with food production, land, and nature – a proactive route to building and advocating for alternatives is far more difficult to imagine."

To some extent, the efforts of the gardeners in Huerto del Rey Moro represent a conscious effort to address this alienation:

> *Currently there's ignorance as to where our food comes from. We're our own reflection of society. I think we need get back to knowing how to cultivate our food or building a certain space. All of these things allow us to break free from these traditional political systems* (male gardener, undisclosed location, May 2017, second participatory video process).

However, the multi-dimensional and pervasive nature of alienation from the modes of production within the food system severely constrains the potential of urban gardens to transform or challenge the capitalist paradigm. Whilst the gardens do represent forms of self-management that are broadly marginalised within the capitalist system, they should be interpreted as a response to the alienating impacts of capitalist processes, and not a fundamental challenge to the capitalist logics which drive urbanisation and urban governance. This is not to dismiss the potential significance of urban community gardens. Rather it is to recognise that External Socio-Cultural Challenges stemming from the naturalisation of capitalism require a multi-dimensional, multi-sector response, of which urban gardens can be only one, albeit potentially significant, part.

Overall, there exist a plethora of challenges both within the gardens and outside of the gardens that constrain their potential impacts at multiple levels. Many of these challenges

relate to the scale and prevalence of gardens, relative to the size of the urban population. However more profound socio-cultural challenges are also identifiable, relating to capitalism-induced alienation and neoliberal individualism, that constrain the transformative impacts of the gardens at scale. Part of the appeal of the gardens, and part of their impact, derives from their contrast to the wider city; their contrast to prevailing neoliberal and capitalist urban trends. Therefore, it is important to consider the extent to which the gardens might be considered transformative spaces, at multiple levels, at their current scale.

Urban Gardens: Impact and Transformation at Scale

This Chapter aimed to address three questions on the actual and potential socio-political impacts of urban community gardens, the challenges that constrain their real and potential socio-political impacts, and the ways that the right to the city might help us to better understand and articulate these impacts at multiple scales.

This Chapter has argued that whilst it is possible to identify numerous pathways to impact associated with the urban garden, the majority of these impacts are either limited in scope, or confined to the gardeners and immediate networks, constrained by a range of challenges both within and outside of the gardeners' control. The exception to this rule, and most potentially profound and transformative impact of urban community gardens is through the generation of a diverse, public space; spaces defined through use, rather than rationalised in anticipation of the community's needs.

In the case of Huerto del Rey Moro in particular, the diverse range of political ideas that are discussed and contested through engagement in the management of the garden are critical to the development of an alternative urban space of multiple possibilities. This Chapter has found that in Seville urban community gardens can only be considered potentially transformative in terms of the types of heterotopic community spaces they embody.

It is possible to identify multiple pathways to positive impact for the gardeners engaged in the urban community gardens. These impacts can have profound and potentially transformative impacts on the gardeners and community:

> *It is clear that coming here and being involved here is totally involved with a transformation I am experiencing myself. It's been two years. It's been a little bit weird for me. Being involved here… I don't like to use the word therapy, perhaps another word. But it's changing, it's changing the dynamics I had before in my life. So it's something I had to change, and I was trying to do that, the dynamics I had before in my routine, the dynamics of my routine. I had to change them. And coming here, not by a conscious decision, it just happened. I feel it was what I was needing* (Xavi, Huerto del Rey Moro, May 2016, first participatory video process).

However, if urban gardens are ever to have deeper and more widespread impacts on urban life it is important to consider, in spite of challenges and constraints, the extent to which they might facilitate structural transformation within a city. In Miraflores Sur, many gardeners emphasised the material transformation of territory, but did not make a connection between the development of a public green space with any political or economic shift.

In Huerto del Rey Moro, some of the gardeners emphasised the prefigurative nature of spaces like the garden, from which transformed individuals might emerge to influence wider society:

> *Here is a goal or purpose of changing the model of society in which we are, there is a greater purpose. So there are many ways to do this. You can get into politics, you can go and create a project here, a project there, create or manage different projects can move around* (male gardener, undisclosed location, May 2017, second participatory video process).

Such transformative impacts are currently only potentials or possibilities. But in the context of a dynamic conception of space, such possibilities are not insignificant. The most tangible transformative impact beyond the wellbeing of individuals engaging with the gardens comes through the transformation of communities through the construction of gardens as dynamic spaces of possibility; simultaneously enabling and empowering communities to create the type of space and the type of community that they want in Seville.

In presenting the challenges constraining the socio-political potential of urban gardens according to the typology in this Chapter, my aim has been to more systematically account for the ways that issues within and outside of the gardens influence their potentials at different scales. I have argued that what could be perceived as internal process challenges are actually critical for defining the character of the gardens as spaces of possibility, which underpins their socio-political potentials at the neighbourhood- and city-levels. This is to say that many of the challenges perceived by gardeners on a day to day basis, are not necessarily issues that constrain the potentials of gardens to have an impact at multiple scales.

This brings us back to Lefebvre's concept of heterotopias, and the potential contribution of the right to the city. In both Huerto del Rey Moro and Miraflores Sur, it has not been through any specific constellation of activities that diverse public spaces have emerged, charged or not with transformative potential. Rather, it is through the spatial concentration of possibility, of opportunity and freedom of thought in the gardens that has been critical in transforming the politics, social values, modes of engagement and interaction, and ethos of an entire community of people. In this sense, the most profound impact of urban community gardens is in creating a space that is not planned, defined, or rationalised, but rather empowers the

gardeners and the local community to participate in project that is at once deeply political, and deeply practical.

Lefebvre's conception of urban space as dynamic, contested, and mobile allows us to characterise the relationships between the gardens as material, as well as political spaces; situating their development within broader social trends and processes. Lefebvre's conception of heterotopic space, in particular, is very useful not only for characterising the nature of the gardens as discrete spaces, but for articulating the significance of these spaces within the wider, neoliberal city.

The spatial concentrations of collective work and collective decision-making in the gardens are not deviant in the institutional sense implied by Foucault, rather they can be understood as both "contrasting" (Lefebvre, 1991: 163) and "repellent" (Ibid: 366), heterotopic spaces. The urban gardens not only represent a material and spatial contrast to the city, they also actively contest, and can be considered repellent to, the prevailing urban socio-political cultures of individualism, private property ownership, and the prioritisation of exchange value over use value.

Lefebvre's concepts of heterotopias and utopias are both contained within his right to the city and supported by the rights of appropriation and participation. Understood in this way, urban community gardens take on a real and potential significance at multiple scales. What is useful about Lefebvre's spatial ontology is that it allows us to also characterise the social and political potentials beyond the level of the gardens and the community.

Within the conception of urban gardens as heterotopic spaces, the same dynamics and processes that enable individual transformations of being, are precisely what enable gardens to impact at the city-level. This is not to dismiss the issue of scale, or issues relating to impact at scale, as outlined in the introduction to this Chapter. Rather it is to recognise that through the lens of the right to the city, the individual-, community-, neighbourhood-, and city-level impacts of the gardens are inextricably linked and mutually dependent.

But to what extent is this contribution specific to urban community gardens? Urban community gardens, as I have argued, represent significant concentrations of possibility within the city. Gardeners in Huerto del Rey Moro are not only contesting the commodification of the city, but issues of neoliberal governmentality, and the alienation of urban inhabitants from land, food production, and community. In this sense they represent a unique set of contrasts to the wider city, as described in the Chapter. As this Chapter has demonstrated the perceived impacts of the garden relate most closely to issues of individual and collective wellbeing. However this is the level of everyday experience and the most likely level at which the gardeners would frame responses to questions about perceived impact. In drawing on the right to the city, these individual-level impacts and transformations take on a new significance.

In accordance with Lefebvre's spatial ontology it is not at the project-level that the socio-political impacts of the gardens are most profound, it is in experimenting with forms of self-management that contrast with and challenge the prevailing processes of "domination" and commodification that characterise what Lefebvre termed, "the urban experience". Lefebvre does not require all urban inhabitants to use the language of the right to the city in order to contribute to its realisation, but it is through this lens that we can better understand and contextualise the significance of these processes; in Huerto del Rey Moro and Miraflores Sur, gardeners do not have to be conscious that they are challenging urban neoliberal trends for it to be happening. Therefore the contribution of the idea of heterotopias to the urban agriculture discourse is in creating a framework through which we might better understand and problematise the production and appropriation of urban commons, not only impacting the community and the neighbourhood, but impacting on the production of the city; a conception of space that accounts for both individual transformations of being, and socio-political impact on all urban processes.

However, it is important to recognise that the idea of heterotopic space also has limitations in the context of urban community gardens; Lefebvre did not discuss the topic directly. The significance of communication, of autonomy, and *convivencia*, in other words, the processes of self-organisation and self-management in the gardens cannot be accounted for through the concept of heterotopic spaces alone. The next Chapter explores these processes and politics of self-organisation within and around Seville's urban gardens.

Chapter 6: Factors Influencing Modes of Self Organisation in and around Seville's Urban Community Gardens

> "There is a conception of urban common spaces as marked by conflicts and contradictions. This allows reflection on the forms of material and symbolic appropriation of these spaces by different social agents, as well as on the dynamics of production, preservation, reproduction, destruction and creation of new urban common spaces" (Alves dos Santos Junior, 2014: 151).

This Chapter examines how two factors – motivations for urban gardening and process of communication – influence processes of *autogestion* in and around urban gardens in Seville, and the ways that these processes manifest spatially. As Chapter 2 described, *autogestion* can be translated as 'self-management', however in the context of the right to the city, the idea is more political, and potentially transformative. This Chapter considers the dynamics and processes of self-organisation and self-management in Huerto del Rey Moro, Miraflores Sur, and within a permaculture collective, La Boldina, that emerged from Huerto del Rey Moro in 2017 and now works in various sites across Seville.

The idea of *autogestion* has its roots in Nineteenth Century anti-Statist political thought. But it took on renewed importance in the context of French academic and union activity during the 1960s and 70s; during the May 1968 Paris strikes and protests '*autogestion'* became a popular rallying cry. Neil Brenner (2001) has argued that whilst *autogestion* translates literally as 'self-management', in the French context it meant more specifically, 'workers control'. In the following decade the idea was adopted by unionist movements across Europe, as well as broader political movements such as the Algerian Independence Movement. During this period the concept evolved considerably through contributions from unionists such as Michel Rocard and Edmond Maire, as well as academic thinkers such as Castoriadis and Lefebvre. But in the 1970s, Lefebvre wrote that that the concept of *autogestion*, carefully and critically defined within his own works, was at risk of becoming a "hollow slogan" (Lefebvre, 1976: 20, cited in Brenner, 2001).

Nevertheless, the idea of *autogestion* is central to Lefebvre's right to the city, defined as the necessary form of self-organisation and self-management that enables urban inhabitants to participate in the management and governance of the city. Lefebvre argued that urban inhabitants had become socially, economically and spatially alienated under capitalism. *Autogestion* therefore offered not only a pathway to reclaiming the city, but a pathway to freedom and dis-alienation, outside of the hegemonic, capitalist system. 'Workers control' was

a principle that followed naturally from his conception of urban space as a collective product, an *oeuvre* (a body of work), of all urban inhabitants. As Lefebvre (1966:150) writes:

> "Only through autogestion can the members of a free association take control of their own life, in such a way that it becomes their work. This is called appropriation, dis-alienation."

Lefebvre argued that *autogestion* should therefore be endorsed as a form of militant democracy that has long been supressed by State and Party-political actors beholden to capitalist interests (Brenner and Elden 2009). As Lefebvre (2009:147) explains,

> "In essence, *autogestion* calls the State into question as a constraining force erected above society as a whole, capturing and demanding the rationality that is inherent to social relations (to social practice)."

Within the right to the city, 'territorial *autogestion*', the large-scale decentralisation and democratisation of governance-management institutions, should be considered a vital process towards contesting the commodification urban space. and reclaiming power from the State. However the centrality of *autogestion* is not unique to Lefebvre; the concept overlaps significantly with the ideas of community-self organisation, autonomy, solidarity, horizontalism, and some articulations of sovereignty.[17]

There exists a large body of literature on the relationships between urban agriculture and 'community' (Delind, 2015; Lyson, 2004), and celebrating the potentials of urban gardening for community development (Saldivar-Tanaka & Kransey, 2004). However the dynamics and politics of community self-organisation in and around urban agriculture projects is currently under-researched. Purcell and Tyman (2015) remains the only article that explicitly considers urban agriculture in terms of Lefebvre's concept of *autogestion*, urging us to recognise urban community gardens as examples of "the fledgling struggle for spatial *autogestion* that is already taking place in the contemporary city" (Ibid: 1142).

In the context of the idea of *autogestion*, gardeners' motivations for participation and the issue of communication can have particular significance. They also intersect significantly with each other. Both the motivations for participating in an urban gardening project and one's approach to communication can reflect internalised conceptions of community-led projects. In this sense the challenges identified relating to communication, and challenges arising from differing motivations and expectations of urban community gardening can be understood as fundamental factors that influence modes of self-organisation and self-management.

[17] See for example Priscilla Claeys' work on counter-hegemonic conceptions of sovereignty within the food sovereignty movement: Claeys, P. (2012). The Creation of New Rights by the Food Sovereignty Movement: The Challenge of Institutionalizing Subversion Why is the Transnational Agrarian Movement for Food. *Sociology*, *46*(5), 844–860.

There exists a substantial body of literature mapping out the diverse motivations of urban inhabitants engaged in urban agriculture projects (such as Connell 2004; Draper & Freedman 2010). Gardeners' motivations have also been examined, for example, in relation to the environmental impacts of urban gardens (Goddard et al 2013). However there has not yet been any research that maps how the diverse motivations for taking part in urban agriculture projects influence the modes of organisation and management in the gardens. This Chapter will attempt to address this gap in the literature by exploring how motivations for gardening and processes of self-management influence one another to constitute the character of the space.

There also exist, at many levels, close relationships between processes of communication and self-management. Lefebvre himself stated in 1989 that communication and technology were the themes that interested him the most (Kofmann and Lebas, 1996). In the introduction to Space and Politics [1973] Lefebvre writes,

> "In the most 'positive' of terms [the right to the city] signifies the right of citizens and city dwellers, and of groups they (on the basis of social relations) constitute, to appear on all the networks and circuits of communication, information and exchange" (Lefebvre, 1996: 194-5).

However, Lefebvre wasn't interested in the micro-politics of communication, the communication between individuals, or the ways that communication influenced modes of *autogestion*. Rather he was interested in the role of communication in reproducing or challenging city-, regional-, and global-level socio-economic trends. It was Manuel Castells that explicitly characterised the relationships between communication and power within what he termed the "networked society" (Castells, 2007). And it was Habermas' Theory of Communicative Action (1984) that offered a pragmatic challenge to universalist and objectivist conceptions of reason by attempting to reconcile collective, lived-experiences with systemic and structural explanations of the world. By signifying the importance of "communicative acts", Habermas' conception of rationality is inherently tied to issues of communication, interaction, and language. It is beyond the scope of this research to attempt to reconcile Habermas' idea of communicative action with Lefebvre's right to the city. But this is an important potential area of further research.

In accordance with Castells and Habermas, this research explores dynamics of communication in terms of the ways that it variously challenges and/or reproduces power dynamics within the urban gardens and influences the modes of self-management that are critical to the idea of the right to the city. The fieldwork focused on the ways that communication was interpreted as both a procedural, managerial challenge and a transformative potential opportunity within the gardens. This Chapter explores not only the

procedural politics of communication, but also the ways through which communication both reinforces and undermines existing power dynamics within communities, and within the city more broadly.

Within the urban agriculture discourse, little attention has been given to the precise forms of communication that exist within urban community gardens. Instead, scholars have tended to focus of the role of communication in network building between projects and social movements (See for example Mougeot, 2005), or the role of communication in building social capital (Kingsley & Townsend, 2006). Elsewhere scholars have argued that urban community gardens can be spaces to enhance communication between disparate social groups (Shinew, Glover, & Parry, 2004), emphasising the 'who', more than the 'how'.

This Chapter aims to contribute to the urban agriculture discourse by examining specifically the ways in which forms of communication can play a critical role in contributing to or hindering the socio-political potentials of urban community gardens, described in the previous Chapter. This Chapter also aims to contribute to the discourse by looking explicitly at how motivations for gardening, in combination with other factors, significantly influence the modes of self-organisation in and around the gardens, both reflecting and constraining their transformative potentials.

The term 'mode of organisation' is used in this Chapter to refer to the diverse processes of management, governance and decision-making within the gardens. The term relates both to the managerial and decision-making structures that are formally or informally, consciously or unconsciously established within the gardens, as well as the ways that power and authority are distributed within these structures. Throughout this Chapter, 'modes of organisation' incorporates both processes of organisation and the resultant structures of organisation; the who, the where, the what, and the how.

This Chapter draws on both participatory video processes, as well as qualitative and ethnographic fieldwork conducted across 2016-17. In the first part of the Chapter I introduce the permaculture collective, La Boldina, outlining how the group emerged and how it operates. Looking across La Boldina, Huerto del Rey Moro and Miraflores Sur, I then address three questions: what are the processes of self-organisation and self-management in each project and how do they manifest spatially; to what extent and in what ways do people's motivations for urban gardening shape processes of self-organisation in and around urban community gardens; and how does communication influence processes of self-organisation? Finally I reflect on the extent to which the right to the city, and specifically Lefebvre's concept of *autogestion* enable us to better understand the processes and potentials of self-organisation and self-management in and around the gardens.

The aim of this Chapter is not to use comparison as a research *method*; there is no attempt to develop a metric or framework to compare modes of organisation between the gardens and

the gardening network. Rather this Chapter employs comparison as a "mode of thought… as a means for situating and contesting existing claims in urban theory, expanding the range of debate, and informing new perspectives" (McFarlane, 2010: 726). Comparison in this sense enables us to emphasise the lived commonalities and contrasts in ways that should be considered "essential to support[ing] different ways of working across diverse urban experiences" (McFarlane & Robinson, 2012: 765).

La Boldina: The Emergence of an Urban Permaculture Collective

La Boldina is an urban permaculture collective that emerged from Huerto del Rey Moro in early 2017. The group was started by a small number of gardeners with a strong interest in permaculture, but it has grown to include a diverse group of thirty-forty people that work regularly on sites across Seville as well as outside the city. Beyond urban gardening, La Boldina is involved in public workshops, advocacy, lectures, and performance art that promote permaculture principles and practice. The name, La Boldina, is a feminine derivative of the plant *Falso Boldo* (*Plectranthus Neochilium*), a hardy, drought-resistant, medicinal plant in the mint family, indigenous to Latin America, which forms a central part of the group's permaculture practices.

The group cultivates a wide range of growing spaces according to permaculture principles. During the second participatory video making process, the group were working in Huerto del Rey Moro, in a large school garden in Macarena, in two occupied houses, on three city-managed plots in Parque de Alamillo, on land made available around a local radio station, and on a small farm outside of the city in Hinojos. The farm is the single largest project that the group is undertaking, and their plans involve a seven-year plan to restore two fallow fields and other farmland. La Boldina's other activities, such as street theatre, take place predominantly in Macarena, within the Casco Antiguo.[18]

La Boldina emerged in response to conflict within Huerto del Rey Moro, particularly in the monthly assemblies. During the second participatory video process members of La Boldina reflected on events Huerto del Rey Moro that precipitated the emergence of La Boldina. The group identified three main factors that, from their perspective, led to the division. The first was that some gardeners felt that Huerto del Rey Moro was reaching its natural limits as an inclusive space. Some members of La Boldina felt that the space was "full of too many people with visions and ideas that are too different" (female gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, May 2017, second participatory video process). Others felt that some individuals were manipulating the open and participatory decision-making processes within the garden.

[18] Through the later part of 2017 and early 2018 the number of projects that the group are involved in has grown dramatically. However this thesis only refers to projects that were underway during the period of fieldwork in May-June 2017.

Secondly, within Huerto del Rey Moro there existed some differences of opinion; *permaculture* and *agroecology* had become polarised terms for contrasting visions for the garden. However, the distinctions between these terms in the garden had little to do with international conceptions of these ideas; permaculture and agroecology share many core principles and can be effectively combined in practice (Hathaway, 2016). Throughout 2016 however, these visions became increasingly divisive and contributed to elements of faction-forming within the garden. Some of the gardeners and local residents felt that committing to one approach, regardless of its merits, went against the inclusive philosophy of the garden. In turn, some of the permaculture gardeners interpreted this antagonism as a hostility towards their permaculture philosophy. As one gardener explained:

> *We had our group and others in the Huerto and slowly our differences in ideas caused us to separate. Our philosophy was a little more constructive and theirs was too but in a different way - they had a less active and more passive way of being. In the end, we couldn't really continue. From there we separated ourselves* (male gardener, undisclosed location, May 2017, second participatory video process).

The third factor was the timing of some acts of vandalism in the garden that contributed to the rapid deterioration of relationships within the community. Cabins on the site were broken in to at night on two occasions and plants were destroyed. There was no evidence that anyone involved with the garden was responsible. However, the incidents exacerbated the distrust that already existed between factions on site; in the monthly assemblies held in late 2016, each side accused the other of knowing more than they had admitted about the vandalism.

This "traumatic split" (male gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, May 2017, second participatory video process) had a profound impact on the permaculture gardeners, affecting how they perceived and in turn used Huerto del Rey Moro. As some gardeners expressed,

> *This space seems to have just been left empty. It's almost disappeared. The needs of this space have changed* (female gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, May 2017, second participatory video process).

> *The two themes that really hit home are emptiness and abandonment. Let's say you're left homeless.* (female gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, May 2017, second participatory video process).

The result was that the permaculture gardeners began to spend less time and worked significantly less in Huerto del Rey Moro. The garden also stopped being the de facto meeting space for the group. From January 2017 the gardeners began to meet regularly in the community meeting space in Casa del Pumarejo to plan their next week's activities. For example, on one day per week, ten to fifteen members of the group visit a farm in Hinojos to work together on transforming a large plot of land according to permaculture principles. On other days small groups gather together to work on other sites in Seville. There are larger

public events organised approximately once per month, and members of La Boldina have started to connect and collaborate with new networks and struggles both within Seville, such as *Red Sevilla por el Clima* (Seville Climate Network), and across Andalucía.

Demographically La Boldina group is diverse, with almost equal numbers of men and women, and with ages ranging between mid-twenties to mid-sixties. However, the group is made up of entirely Mediterranean Europeans, predominantly from Spain, but also from Italy and other European countries. This reflects the general make-up of the urban gardeners in the city who are overwhelmingly Mediterranean European, including in Huerto del Rey Moro and Miraflores Sur. Only 4.5% of Seville's population comes from overseas,[19] with the majority from European and Latin American countries. In comparison to other Western European cities,[20] there is a visible lack of ethnic diversity, and this is particularly apparent in the gardens contained within this study.[21] In reference to their split from Huerto del Rey Moro, some members of La Boldina noted the importance of having a sense of home.

Some months after the split from Huerto del Rey Moro, many of the gardeners started to spend time again in the space, although considerably less than they had previously. Many of the relationships have been reconciled, and the members of La Boldina have started to reflect on both the nature of the disputes within the space and the positive outcomes for all parties. For La Boldina, there now exists an organisation that reflects the needs and values of the group, and enables them to continue the collective ethos that developed in Huerto del Rey Moro:

> *La Boldina was born from a crisis period of the Huerto del Rey Moro. It was born from a dark period. We brought the light back through this group. Through this permaculture group… This is a vision that our group shares as a family* (male gardener, Hinojos, May 2017, second participatory video process).

> *Look at what's changed. Before, the attraction was the space itself. Now the attraction is our group. It's creating the desire for people to join our cause and do projects with us. Everyone has their own goals and desires. And as a group we join*

[19] UrbiStat: https://ugeo.urbistat.com/AdminStat/en/es/classifiche/percentuale-stranieri/comuni/sevilla/41/3 [accessed May 2018].
[20] In Madrid, for example, over 12% of the population come from overseas (op. cit.).
[21] Migrant communities do exist in Seville's urban periphery. However, this research process did not engage with any urban gardens with significant non-Mediterranean involvement. The most significant minority population in Seville is the *gitano* community. Until the 1970s, the majority of the *gitano* population lived in and around Triana. However, as Triana became a desirable commercial and tourist area through the Twentieth Century, the City Hall displaced and relocated the community to a new estate, *Tres Mil Viviendas*, in the southern urban periphery. There do exist urban gardening projects in and around *Tres Mil*, some of which have links to gardeners in Huerto del Rey Moro, however they did not form a part of this research study.

> *all of these ideas. We integrate the complexities of each one of us* (female gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, May 2017, second participatory video process).

Some members of La Boldina are grateful to finally have a space that allows them greater autonomy over their practices, without the need to engage in deliberative, participatory processes; members join the group because they already share many of its values. In this sense the group is less open, and less inclusive. The formation of La Boldina has caused other members to reflect on the nature of Huerto del Rey Moro.

> *Through time I realised that the garden had more dimensions... I used to be bothered by these differences. I used to say 'these people don't even come here to work. What are these ideas?' I then started to realise that this is an inclusive space and that we had to understand that there are differences in opinion even if these people are people you don't see on a day to day basis… This initial mentality was me thinking that the garden was just the same people that I would see every day. Then I awoke and learned that the garden is about much more than that. It's much more complex* (male gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, May 2017, second participatory video process).

Out of what was perceived to be a crisis in the garden has emerged a new urban collective, with a form of collective self-organisation derived from their experience in Huerto del Rey Moro, but without any of the spatial constraints or personal disputes that characterised the garden space. The organisation is extremely flexible, adaptive, and with a "wild energy" (female gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, May 2017, second participatory video process), "a constant storm of ideas, theories, and practices" (male gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, May 2017, second participatory video process); a system designed to meet the needs of people "with completely different lives" (male gardener, Triana, May 2017, second participatory video process). Some members described the collective not as an organisation, but as a family:

> *It makes me think of the word, 'family'. One day at the meeting someone said that La Boldina was a family. I think we're creating a family* (female gardener, San Jeronimo, May 2017, second participatory video process).

> *It's almost like a family and I love it - how people who are so diverse can come together and connect. It's very important for me* (male gardener, undisclosed location, May 2017, second participatory video process).

The group is predicated on mutual support and exchange, which seeks to maximise the capacities and assets of each of its members, stressing the idea that each member brings something distinctly valuable to the group:

> *People choose different spaces in which to help out. Some help through the environment, some through knowledge, some through culture, and some through dialogue* (male gardener, Triana, May 2017, second participatory video process).

La Boldina's commitment to permaculture is reflected both in the spaces they cultivate and in the group itself, including how it functions and how it engages with the wider city. The group is consciously diverse and non-hierarchical, comprising gardeners, architects, teachers, and performing artists, amongst others. Knowledge of permaculture varies significantly, from those that are entirely new to the practice, to those that have accumulated a vast knowledge over many years. However, by creating a space for knowledge sharing, discussion and experimentation, La Boldina has become a creative and adaptive organisation, from which diverse projects emerge and take shape organically.

In La Boldina, permaculture is a philosophy that extends beyond urban food production. Whilst food and the environment are central themes, the group also uses permaculture as a lens through which they engage with other urban processes; a permaculture-inspired community, for example, should be diverse, adaptive, and self-managing. At the same time agroecological ideas, such as recognising interconnectivity and cycles, are being repurposed as social and political principles for engaging with broader urban issues including the speculative housing market and gentrification of working class neighbourhoods. As one member explains, permaculture principles are increasingly "reflected in the private lives of the group" (male gardener, undisclosed location, May 2017, second participatory video process).

La Boldina is still building its own practices, identity, and modes of organisation. However, they have already identified and are beginning to work at a much greater scale than in Huerto del Rey Moro and adapting their decision-making processes to work for a more mobilised and active group of participants.

Modes of Self-Organisation and their Spatiality

Despite their significant differences, it is possible to compare processes and structures of self-organisation and self-management across the three projects. The primary distinctions between Huerto del Rey Moro, Miraflores Sur, and La Boldina relate not to the forms of management (and power relations therein), but to the scale at which the projects operate.

La Boldina is not a formal organisation; it functions more like a supportive network, which capably manages several simultaneous projects. Many of the group's gardening projects begin through one member's access to a site, or personal relationship with a person who could grant access. La Boldina meet at least once per week for approximately three hours. Compared to the assemblies at Huerto del Rey Moro, the meetings are more informal and

less structured. Whilst the group take it in turns to propose items for an agenda, the majority of meetings are taken up by discussion of spontaneous ideas and issues.

La Boldina prides itself on its strong group cohesion, which depends “less on personalities” (male gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, June 2017, second participatory video process) than the management of Huerto del Rey Moro. The group brings together people with diverse interests, skills and values, but with an interest in permaculture.

> *In La Boldina I see people with many different values and interests that all come together, and I see myself in each one of these people* (male gardener, undisclosed location, May 2017, second participatory video process).

> *Well, in the group there is a variety of interesting people. These people come from all walks of life. That’s something that I really enjoy - everyone committing to this cause... No one asks anything of anyone and everyone gives what they’re able to* (female gardener, Parque de Alamillo, June 2017, second participatory video process).

The weekly meetings are always held in the same space, although the numerous projects the group is involved in means that much discussion and decision-making occurs outside of the organised meetings; in fields, streets, and gardens in and around Seville. Decisions regarding the strategic direction of the group are taken collectively. Decisions regarding specific projects are also taken collectively but never without the individual that negotiated La Boldina’s access to the space.

In many respects the group represents what Murray Bookchin has identified as an anarchist mode of organisation, emphasising mutual aid, both individual and collective intellectual and emotional development, and an expedient, flexible, and responsive organisational structure. There is no formal hierarchy and all members are invited to participate in discussion and decision-making processes. This contrasts with decision-making structures in Huerto del Rey Moro, but most significantly with Miraflores Sur.

Miraflores Sur is managed formally by a Gardeners’ Association, headed by a long-term gardener, Manuel Fernandez, who was elected by the group. The Head of the Association is responsible for organising events in the garden, reallocating disused plots, managing communications within the garden, and liaising with the Parque de Miraflores Association, the primary conduit to City Hall. Whilst this evidences a hierarchical decision-making structure, the fact that the head of the Gardener’s Association is a long-term user of the space, has a personal relationship with almost every gardener on the site, and is very accessible to the other gardeners, means that the gardeners do not feel that it is necessarily undemocratic.

Indeed, the election of a representative to take decisions on behalf of the group closely mirrors the form of representative democracy employed by the State.[22]

Outside of the formal management structure, the garden is developed and maintained according to decisions made by the community of gardeners. For example, decisions on how to cultivate shared and communal areas are made through discussion, and on an *ad hoc* basis. This form of decision-making depends upon the strong, amiable relationships between the gardeners, something that was emphasised by every gardener interviewed through the participatory video making process:

> "*You have relations with many people, with Jose, with Manuel, with many people who have relationships. We share things, we help one another*" (female gardener, Miraflores Sur, May 2016, first participatory video process).

Sharing both administrative and manual work in the garden is central to the gardeners' mode of organisation. This can be seen in the ways that they collaborate on construction projects, and exchange skills amongst the group. This mutuality can also be seen in the complicated, self-managed networks whereby tools, seeds and knowledge are shared and exchanged.

Within Miraflores Sur, gardeners have control over their own plots, so long as they abide by general rules set by the Association. For example, gardeners cannot use chemical pesticides. However, the close communication between the gardeners, and the continuous exchange of knowledge and experience means that there is a gradual, progressive alignment between plots and growing methods the longer gardeners work at the site.

As discussed in previous Chapters, today's organisational structures contrast significantly with the participatory, community-led process that established the park. Much like in Huerto del Rey Moro today, the management of Parque de Miraflores was initially negotiated within the community. The initial process of self-organisation from 1983-1991 was reflexive and dynamic, as the current Head of the Parque de Miraflores Association explained:

> *There was no previous experience. This little model is the model that emerged gradually with people… Neighbourhood assemblies were happening and then gradually we came here to the park and started doing assemblies in the park as well… It was made from the meeting point of a physical vision and a social vision* (interview with Manuel Lara, Miraflores Sur, May 2016).

However, the structures that were created, including monthly assemblies, no longer exist. Today the community of gardeners is far less mobilised, and far less adaptive than the site's initial founders. This does not signify a lack of political engagement, rather it is a different

[22] For a comprehensive critique of representative democracy see Guinier, L. (1995). *The tyranny of the majority: Fundamental fairness in representative democracy.* New York: Free Press.

mode of political organisation to the more participatory and deliberative democratic processes in Huerto del Rey Moro and La Boldina; one that relies on more widely practiced systems of representation and hierarchy, and a close, albeit mutable, relationship with the City Hall.

In Huerto del Rey Moro, decisions regarding the planning and management of the garden are taken in monthly assemblies, which typically last for two to three hours. Huerto del Rey Moro is a consciously non-hierarchical space, as such there is currently no formal management structure or decision-making body beyond the monthly assemblies. Shortly after the garden was first occupied, an *Asociation* was created to manage the space, *Asociacion del Huerta del Rey Moro*. However, over time the organisation became less active as a management body, as decisions regarding the management of the site were taken through assemblies, and spontaneously through collective work in the garden. Many of the gardeners and local residents that were part of the *Asociation* still participate in the monthly assemblies as individuals, however the *Asociation* is largely redundant. This change is significant in terms of creating a more horizontal space within the garden.

Assemblies are chaired by one of the gardeners; rotating within a small group of six to eight people. The assembles are semi-structured, but also provide time for unstructured discussion and debate on issues that people might raise. The assemblies are not dominated by any one individual or group, however there exist two prominent factions within the garden with different priorities regarding its development and management. In 2016 the two main factions that emerged comprised the permaculture gardeners that would go on to form La Boldina, and a group of some of the local mothers that use the garden on a daily to weekly basis as a recreational space for their children. Throughout 2016 discussions and debates within the assemblies typically took place along faction lines, however these factions were neither exclusive nor fixed, and several prominent figures in the community were not aligned with one side or another.

Members of the Huerto del Rey Moro assembly also hold participatory workshops to discuss specific issues or make plans for specific areas or events within the site. These workshops occur once or twice per year as required and bring together the majority of those people that participate in the monthly assemblies. These spaces were an important means of conflict resolution within the garden, were a productive and inclusive way of planning around contentious topics. For example, in October 2016, the garden hosted a ‘visioning’ workshop, for approximately forty regular users of the site to develop and share their visions for the future of the space. This was a way to diffuse tensions, and increase communication, between the two factions, as well as involving a greater number of local residents in decisions regarding the planning and development of the garden. However, whilst these workshops were productive and reconciliatory in the short term, they were not sufficient to prevent the split that led to the formation of La Boldina.

Whilst Huerto del Rey Moro is nominally non-hierarchical, there are two primary mechanisms by which hierarchies have emerged. The first is through control of management processes. For example, the Huerto del Rey Moro website (huertodelreymoro.org) is managed by one individual. The website is the primary way that non-local residents learn about the activities in the garden and is the primary form of communication with the wider public. This arrangement has caused some tensions within the garden, particularly with some of the permaculture gardeners, who argued that the website should be managed collectively by those that work frequently in the space. In a sense the website was increasingly eschewed by the gardeners that work in the space on a day-to-day basis. Instead, they share information about their activities in the garden via social media and email lists, both of which are collectively managed. Whilst this gives the gardeners greater control over the information shared and the ways the garden is represented online, the website is the most visible online face of the garden.

Similarly, the Huerto del Rey Moro contact email address and phone number are managed by individuals. This arrangement has been agreed by assembly, however it means that decisions taken by these individuals in the weeks between assemblies about how to respond to requests and queries fall to just one or two people. There is also only one treasurer for the garden. Whilst the account books are open to all members of the assemblies to view, and are regularly discussed, in reality, they are only viewed by a very small number of people.

The second primary way that some individuals are given more power in the horizontal management structure is through the epistemic authority possessed by certain gardeners. This is particularly important for the group of gardeners that work according to permaculture principles. The small number of individuals with training in permaculture, or with years of experience working according to permaculture principles are granted the authority to make important decisions regarding the management of the garden spaces. This is not a source of tension amongst the gardeners, however it is a source of tension with the monthly assemblies, where many local residents, who do not regularly work in the gardens, feel that it is being controlled by a small and specific faction of people.

Overall however, to a first-time visitor to the space, Huerto del Rey Moro, the community is highly self-organised, participatory, inclusive and dynamic. The adaptive management structure has emerged through negotiation and relationship-building within the community. Many of the challenges and conflicts that have arisen within the monthly assemblies are a testament to the degree of horizontality and commitment that characterise the gardeners and local residents. As one local resident explained:

> *Well from the moment we entered the park we felt that it was important for this space to be organised and taken care of and managed by the neighbours within our community. Many of us were members of the collective movement and had experience working as a group together before so we all knew each other. We*

> *wanted everyone who participated to have an equal voice and opinion and wanted everyone to be able to easily come and join. The process has been difficult, and wonderful* (interview with female gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, May 2017).

When compared side by side, the management structures of Huerto del Rey Moro and La Boldina are not dissimilar. The greatest distinction is the space in which these self-management processes occur. While Huerto del Rey Moro's assemblies takes place in a public space, and actively invites participants with diverse ideas and levels of engagement with the garden, La Boldina takes place in a semi-private space. The semi-private nature of the management space reinforces the dynamic that those in the room already share a number of core principles. This lack of conflict allows the group to be more dynamic and responsive to opportunities and new projects, however it lacks the conscious and hard-fought deliberative elements of Huerto del Rey Moro.

Miraflores Sur is the greatest contrast to both Huerto del Rey Moro and La Boldina, the gardeners having consciously opted for a representative democratic management structure. Whilst it is beyond the scope of this Chapter to compare the merits and shortcomings of representative and deliberative democratic processes, it is useful to consider how these processes manifest spatially within the gardens.

Miraflores' shift from a deliberative to a representative management structure coincided with the increasing involvement of the City Hall in the gardens. Through time, the changing relationship with the City hall has had a significant spatial impact on the site. The City Hall maintains the infrastructure of the garden to a high standard; the paths that run in between rows of plots are well-maintained and respected by the gardeners and visitors to the site. However, the involvement of the City Hall has also constrained spontaneous development or community planning within the gardens. The Head of the Association in Miraflores Sur, believes that this stability is important for encouraging gardeners to invest in the community:

> *If things always changed, it would not be effective. It is not good, having no structure. There would be no love for that* (Manuel Fernandez, Miraflores Sur, May 2016, first participatory video process).

In Miraflores Sur there has also been a steady decrease in the amount of communal space across the site. In part this has been to meet the increasing demand for individual plots. Some of the gardeners noted that it had been better when there was more communal space. One of the ways that gardeners have recreated these shared spaces is through the construction of communal Sun shelters that bridge adjacent plots. These shelters are used daily by the gardeners and enhance the relationships between close neighbours. However, the overall lack of communal space means that gardeners across the site do not communicate regularly. The engagement of the gardens with City Hall has also led to increased security and fences around the site, as discussed in Chapter 5.

The spatial dimensions of management in Miraflores Sur contrast significantly with Huerto del Rey Moro, where the layout of the garden is continuously renegotiated, reimagined, and remade according to the needs of the community. Decisions regarding future plans for the space are taken in monthly assemblies, however until the end of 2016, the permaculture gardeners who went on to create the collective, La Boldina, spent proportionately more time, and contribute proportionately more labour to the space. Therefore, decisions taken by this group, outside of the assemblies, often spontaneously, have a disproportionate influence on the space. For example, the decision to create or close paths through the garden significantly impact their perceived accessibility to visitors to the site.

In the assemblies, some of the local mothers that bring their children to the space on a daily or weekly basis accused the permaculture gardeners of creating unwelcoming or prohibited spaces within the garden, as well as arguing that the overgrown plants are “invading” the family space. The differing visions of these groups manifests spatially within the site, where garden areas are sharply distinguished from children’s play areas, which are also used to host events. However, through 2016, both groups remained committed to ensuring that overall, Huerto del Rey Moro remains an inclusive and open space, even if this means a degree of spatial segregation within the site. And so, the majority of gardeners and local mothers continue to participate in the assemblies, even when they have become, at times, fraught and contested. The spatial divisions between the children’s play areas and garden area remained throughout 2017 after the formation of La Boldina.

Currently La Boldina does not have a coherent spatial strategy. Their various projects have emerged opportunistically. However, within the group there is a conscious desire to connect growing spaces from across the city, a desire that was not ever articulated when the group were based in Huerto del Rey Moro. The majority of their non-growing activities are centred around Macarena, in the area between Casa del Pumarejo and Huerto del Rey Moro.

The spatial contrast between Huerto del Rey Moro and Miraflores Sur is perhaps the most significant. A visitor to either garden will very quickly recognise the different cultures of the spaces by the ways that the gardens are planned and managed. In Miraflores the closely regulated plots reflect an effort of the management to ensure efficiency of individual plots within the bounded area, whilst the carefully planned individual plots reflect the efforts of the gardeners to produce as much food as possible within their allotted space. In Huerto del Rey Moro efficient use of space is not an idea that is used within the garden. The diverse and often chaotic space reflects a desire to include as many people as possible within the community. Sometimes this manifests as spatial divisions within the garden, but when compared to Miraflores, Huerto del Rey Moro has created a larger and more diverse community with far less land.

Motivations for Urban Gardening and their Impacts on Self-Organisation

In Huerto del Rey Moro and Miraflores Sur there are significant differences in terms of gardeners' motivations for participating in both the practice of urban gardening, and how this impacts on the management of the projects. These contrasts are even more significant when compared with La Boldina.

Through the first participatory video-making process, we asked gardeners in both gardens about their motivations for participating in the gardens. Gardeners' stated motivations for urban gardening overlap significantly with the perceived impacts of urban gardening. However, motivations for gardening refer to potential, anticipated impacts only, and can differ significantly from the identifiable impacts of the gardens.

In Miraflores Sur, many of the gardeners interviewed practiced urban agriculture for the anticipated positive impacts it would have on their lives. Whereas in Huerto del Rey Moro some gardeners were motivated by their interest in permaculture, but many participate for more tangential reasons, including the nature of the space itself. Overall, we identified four primary motivations for gardening, some of which are specific to one garden, and some of which were identifiable across both sites.

The primary motivations identified are: the positive anticipated impact of urban gardening on health and wellbeing; a childhood connection to gardening and food production; interest in community building and collective learning; and a desire to work closely with nature. The second motivation was exclusive to Miraflores Sur, whilst an interest in community-building and collective learning was found to be a motivation in only Huerto del Rey Moro. In both gardens, gardeners were motivated by the anticipated health and wellbeing benefits of urban gardening and expressed a desire to work closely with nature, however there were significant differences in responses between the sites.

In Miraflores Sur, the gardeners spoke at length about the perceived and anticipated health benefits of urban gardening, as well as the opportunity to produce one's own vegetables. Some gardeners also argued that gardening was good for their mental wellbeing:

> *Well, what can I say, do a physical activity, you move outdoors and have over healthy food. Well, what more do you want?* (male gardener, Miraflores Sur, April 2016, first participatory video process).

> *The oxygen we take, talking with our neighbours. It's an outdoor gym, this is our gym* (female gardener, Miraflores Sur, May 2016, first participatory video process).

> *[We have] products of organic farming, healthy food to eat daily* (male gardener, Miraflores Sur, April 2016, first participatory video process).

Beyond the health and wellbeing impacts of urban gardening, real or anticipated, detailed in Chapter 5, many retired gardeners in Miraflores Sur spoke about a childhood connection to food and farming:

> *Because it's a hobby for me, I like it and am in touch with nature. It transports me to my childhood with my father… I was brought up with a small field and orchard* (male gardener, Miraflores Sur, April 2016, first participatory video process).

> *I started working in the fields at thirteen years old. Well, now this is not work, but hey, you return a little to the earth*" (male gardener, Miraflores Sur, April 2016, first participatory video process).

> *I have been a big fan of horticulture, since childhood. As a child I lived in a house in Macarena with painted pots of tomatoes, onions, and all those things* (male gardener, Miraflores Sur, April 2016, first participatory video process).

In both gardens, both younger and older gardeners spoke about their desire to be close to nature. However, in Miraflores Sur, gardeners emphasised the positive impact that proximity to nature had on their wellbeing:

> *It means to have an outdoor space in the heart of the city, and enjoy the sun, the birds, the perspiration… It means being in contact with nature close to home, next to your home* (female gardener, Miraflores Sur, May 2016, first participatory video process).

Whereas in Huerto del Rey Moro many gardeners expressed their desire to bring nature into their neighbourhood through gardening, as well as in terms of grander societal change:

> *We had no clue what we wanted the space to be. What we did know was that we wanted our children to be able to touch the soil, feel the environment, and have a space that was ours* (interview with female gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, May 2017).

> *The objectives here, for me, is to create harmony between man and nature* (female gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, May 2016, first participatory video process).

Finally, a small number of gardeners from both sites expressed that their interest in specific approaches to growing food. In Miraflores Sur, some of the gardeners have attended training courses in agriculture/horticulture, organised by the City Hall, and wanted to put this knowledge to practical use. In Huerto del Rey Moro, a significant proportion of the gardeners were motivated to participate in the garden due to their interest in permaculture. Their understanding of permaculture in the garden is very broad, relating to plants and land management, but also a philosophical approach to the environment that extends to society and the economy:

> *I came here because I'm interested in permaculture. I was in Italy, I met [a gardener] on a permaculture course. Then I dedicated myself to design for the environment. And I think best thing is to work for the environment, but the social also, for an economy, to create a new economy* (female gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, May 2016, first participatory video process).

I return to this subject in Chapter 7.

So how do these diverse motivations affect the process of self-organisation in the gardens? In Miraflores Sur, the gardeners that come primarily for the anticipated health benefits associated with gardening, as well as a childhood connection to food growing, have a distinctly individualised vision of the garden; it is a space that contributes towards fulfilling their physical and emotional needs. For this reason, the organisational structures in the garden play predominantly an enabling role, securing their ongoing use of the site and facilitating access to inputs, such as woodchip and composting material. These gardeners are happy to delegate management decisions to the elected hierarchy.

Some of the gardeners in Miraflores Sur that have worked in the gardens for many years or either have accumulated significant knowledge about food production involve themselves in management decisions informally, usually by engaging with the Head of the Gardener's Association, in order to influence, for example, decisions about purchasing of inputs for the garden. These same gardeners are also critical within the garden's informal networks for seed saving and sharing, which enable the group to continuously, collectively improve their seed stock and avoid having to buy commercially-produced seeds.

Overall, the elected management structure in the Miraflores Sur meets the needs of the community of gardeners. The community is characterised by its strong interpersonal relationships, however there is little enthusiasm for change or improvement, either to the managerial structures or the material planning of the site. For this reason it suits the gardeners to delegate the relatively simple tasks of allocating plots and purchasing inputs to an elected representative.

This is in sharp contrast to Huerto del Rey Moro where people's motivations for urban gardening are closely linked to the struggle for public, community space, as detailed in previous Chapters. The activity of urban gardening therefore represents a practical outlet and a focus for much of this energy. For this reason, the vast majority of gardeners and many local residents are involved in its ongoing governance and management.

In Huerto del Rey Moro the desire not only to be close to nature, but to create a productive and sustainable community around gardens is inherently tied to a commitment, at least on part of the most active gardeners, to a collective and community-led project. This commitment manifests as a horizontal and democratic approach not only to working on the land, but also to decision-making within the community.

After the creation of La Boldina, permaculture played a less critical role in the management of Huerto del Rey Moro. In part this is because the most active gardeners are now working regularly in a variety of spaces beyond the garden. Many of the remaining gardeners in Huerto del Rey Moro retained community-building motivations for gardening, but agroecological (meaning in this context, organic) food production and gardening became the dominant discourse.

In Miraflores Sur the prevalence of individual health and wellbeing as a motivating factor for taking up urban gardening is reflected in gardeners' expectations from the management of the project. The role of the management processes serves primarily to secure and enable gardeners to meet their needs and expectations of gardening activities. Whereas in Huerto del Rey Moro, the pervasive motivation of building a community and a community space manifests in the horizontal management structure, detailed above. The motivation and expectation of participants in the space is not to produce significant amounts of food or take control of an individual parcel of land. Rather it is to share and thus contribute to a public green space in the neighbourhood.

These community-oriented motivations mean that the majority of visitors are prepared, or even expect, to participate in community activities, including festivals, workshops, and assemblies. For this reason the monthly assemblies should be understood not only as a conscious effort to create a democratic and participatory space, but a practical way of meeting the expectations of the gardeners and visitors to the site. In this way the assemblies have become a self-reinforcing mode of organisation. First time visitors to the garden are confronted by a democratic and open form of self-management that influences would-be-gardeners' decisions about whether or not to become part of the community; certainly many of the gardeners of Miraflores Sur today would be put off by the lively and often contested management processes in Huerto del Rey Moro.

To a great extent, the members of La Boldina share many motivations with the gardeners of Huerto del Rey Moro, comprising as they did, a significant proportion of the gardeners at the site. However, there are significant differences in terms of how these motivations were articulated, as well as new motivations that were not described in 2016. These discrepancies allow us to better understand the organisational politics and potential significance of the new group. The motivations for members of La Boldina fall into three categories: the desire to work with nature, specifically through permaculture; the desire to be part of a community; and the desire to drive societal change.

Every member of La Boldina expressed their desire to work closely with nature. Sometimes this is very practical, members of the group described wanting to be in contact with the soil and work with the land. Other times they described the way that working with nature enables them to work more productively in the rest of their lives. And at other times nature is spoken of in terms of both its intrinsic and symbolic value; gardens are often referred to as "a

paradise". In this way, La Boldina project their more abstract values onto material garden spaces, which have come to represent embody something profound and abstract for members of the group. Overall, the desire to work with nature is most frequently expressed in relation to permaculture:

> *For me this has been my main motivation for wanting to stay. The permaculture… It's something that's very important to me and now this is what I do* (male gardener, undisclosed location, May 2017, second participatory video process).

The second primary motivation of members of La Boldina relates to their changing concept of community. The establishment of La Boldina was an attempt to build a close community around the theme of permaculture:

> *I came here on the first step of my journey because it is somewhere that resonated with my history and with my way of being. Here I feel completely connected with the people and can relate to them 24 hours per day... It's a great spot for people to learn from each other and to grow* (male gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, May 2017, second participatory video process).

However, in contrast to in Huerto del Rey Moro, the idea of community is no longer bound to a particular space or area, rather it can exist simultaneously at multiple scales. Whilst recognising that it is not possible to separate one from the other (Hargreaves, 2004), La Boldina can be considered primarily a community *of interest*, rather than *of place*. This has liberated the members of the group in terms of the types, locations, and scales of project that they are beginning to involve themselves with:

> *Since I don't have a family, I also don't have a home. If there is a project in Seville, then I'll be here in Seville. If there is one in China, I'll be in China. I want to open myself more in order to achieve a more global community* (female gardener, Huerto del Santa Marina, May 2017, second participatory video process).

The third primary motivation identifiable within La Boldina is the desire to drive wider societal change. This motivation existed to some extent amongst the same group in Huerto del Rey Moro, however it is now far more explicit, directed at both transforming industrial, intensive farming systems as well as bringing about a more collective and empathetic social culture.

> *For me it's a strong community experience with many people who are conscience that they want a different direction in our current society* (male gardener, undisclosed location, May 2017, second participatory video process).

> *The concept of groups and family, water in Andalucía, and the change from intensive cultivation to more varied and permanent cultivation* (male gardener, Triana, May 2017, second participatory video process).

As a small organisation, members of La Boldina recognise the limitations of their activities in enabling grand socio-economic transformation. What has changed however from their time in Huerto del Rey Moro is the more strategic way that the group is managing its projects towards maximum exposure through engagement with a public audience. La Boldina want to advocate for changes in the way that people think about and manage natural resources, and they organise themselves to maximise their impact in this direction.

When compared to the dynamics between motivations and self-management in the two urban gardens, La Boldina's approach appears far more linear, focused, and purposeful. The group self-organises to self-manage a wide range of projects – gardening, teaching, cultural projects, art and theatre – that contribute towards their permaculture-oriented aims. La Boldina's form of self-organisation is both practical and aspirational. On one hand the group organise to maximise the skills and capacities of each member in order to have maximum outreach within the city. On the other hand the group dedicates significant time to unfocused discussion for developing both their identity as a group, and a collective vision for transforming the city according to permaculture principles, both ecological and social. This dual approach is creative and productive, however it is too early in the life of the group to anticipate how they will deal with significant potential conflicts in future. What is perhaps most significant about the self-management of La Boldina, in contrast to both Huerto del Rey Moro and La Boldina, is the way that the visions for future actions in Seville include the self-management of processes beyond urban agriculture and gardening; including manufacturing, education, and housing. I explore this issue in Chapter 7. La Boldina's visons for the group, and ultimately the city, are continuously communicated and contested within the group. The next section considers how these processes of communication affect the dynamics of self-organisation and self-management.

The Significance of Communication for *Autogestion* in Urban Gardens

The importance of communication within the urban gardens was one of the primary findings of the first participatory video process. Through a series of participatory workshops, detailed in Chapter 3, and drawing on reflections after spending time in both gardens, the gardeners from Huerto del Rey Moro identified the issue of communication as critical to the ongoing self-management of the gardens.

Our conversations about communication began about the logistical challenges of communication for exchanging information and managing the space. Initially, the gardeners emphasised communication as primarily being about engagement, specifically the need to be continuously communicating in order to effectively manage the garden:

> *You have to be… during all the time you're here you're exchanging information. You are asking, sometimes they are asking you, but all the time, in my experience that is what you have to do, be in a continuous process of exchanging information* (male gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, April 2016, first participatory video process)

However, as we spent more time exploring the nature of communication together, gardeners began to think about communication not in terms of individual conversations, but in terms of the construction of a more collective entity that exists beyond individuals. In this way, the gardeners' conceptualisation of communication swiftly moved towards Habermas' (1984) Theory of Communicative Action, understood as cooperative action undertaken by individuals through deliberation and argumentation. For example, the gardeners discussed the importance of empathy and shared values for effective communication, as well as the role of communication in socialisation and community-building.

> *To me the meaning of communication in a space like this is to discover from the inside that we are not individual beings. That we are a collective consciousness. So it's the transition from a uni-directional communication to a multi-directional communication where it is not only a person who explains something and another person who replies. But it is a constant process where information comes and goes everywhere. And I think that this transformation occurs when we start to live and work in community. I think that is why this place is so important because we go back to the essence of working together* (interview with female gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, June 2016).

In 2016 the gardeners in Huerto del Rey Moro and Miraflores identified multiple distinct modes of communication within the gardens. These modes are distinguished to a greater extent than the precise form of communication – verbal, online, etc – as they correspond with specific visions for the management of the gardens. In Miraflores Sur, the group emphasised the importance of face-to-face communication over digital media, due in part to the available technologies when the gardens and park began:

> *We also have to think that this project was born when there was no Internet. Of course, there was no Internet, there were no emails, so communication patterns here have been a little different to projects that are born now, right? Now projects are born, they have a very powerful virtual or digital part, and many times a fainter physical and real part. We are the opposite* (male visitor, Miraflores Sur, June 2016, first participatory video process).

In Huerto del Rey Moro there is also a strong face-to-face element of communication in the garden, as well as the use of numerous signs and notices to share information, advertise events, and as of 2017, lay out the 'rules' of the garden to visitors. However, in both gardens there was also a clear process of tacit, indirect communication through which knowledge and

ideas were shared. In the first participatory video output, one gardener in Huerto del Rey Moro explained that for him,

> *Communication is knowing the space, this space, knowing how… knowing how the land, the space, how the garden talks. And it has a really slow rhythm that I am still trying to figure out myself* (Xavi, Huerto del Rey Moro, May 2016, first participatory video process).

With the garden, communication between gardeners and local residents has steadily increased over time, reflecting the growth and consolidation of a community around the space. For some of the gardeners, better communication is a measure of the progress they have made towards creating a diverse and inclusive space:

> *It is difficult, but it is also exciting to see how certain attitudes are changing over time, it can be seen as a sign of change. For example, I see relations between people growing every time. From when I first came to now, I think there is a more conducive environment for communication* (male gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, May 2017, first participatory video process).

Nevertheless, many gardeners also identified communication as a primary challenge to self-organisation, not only within the garden, but within wider society. As one gardener explained,

> *Seville society is a society that apparently communicates quite well. They are open people, they really like to have beer in bars, and to chat in the street, apparently it is a very open society. But when you dig a little deeper there are also profound communication problems* (male gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, May 2017, first participatory video process).

These “profound communication problems” manifest on one hand as an inability to communicate within and between disparate communities, and on the other hand as an unwillingness to do so. Some gardeners suggested this was because people inherently avoided conflict by avoiding political discussion at any level. Nevertheless, many gardeners in Huerto del Rey Moro also identified the unique potentials of community-managed green spaces to mitigate these challenges and enable deeper and more effective communication within the community. In this way Huerto del Rey Moro These represents not only a contrast to the wider, individualising city, but a crucible for a new form of urban community:

> *So really for me this is a place where the dialogue that normally in society is broken, takes place. We talk all together, we eat all together, we coexist we make society again I think* (male gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, May 2017, first participatory video process).

In Miraflores Sur, the strong relationships within the garden have mitigated the desire of the group for a more organised, deliberative structure. Conflicts within the garden are very rare,

and the gardeners are content for decisions to be taken by the management structure. This does not mean that there is necessarily poor communication within the gardens, but rather, there is little desire to create the type of communicative spaces that might enable potentially more profound levels of communication beyond the day-to-day management of the space.

In Huerto del Rey Moro, the multiple simultaneous levels of communication serve to galvanise a community around the garden. This resonates with Lefebvre's (2003) notion of "sites of encounter". He argued that the capitalist city alienates its inhabitants from one another by making them passive consumers instead of active citizens within the territory. In this sense sites of unchoreographed, spontaneous encounter, are critical for overcoming segregation, reconnecting and re-socialising urban inhabitants.

Overall, the constellation of modes of communication within the gardens has forged connections and shared values between disparate urban inhabitants, through discussion, through debate, and through shared work, as Raul Puente Asuero explains,

> *That is the best example of that communication exists, right? Because in the end people come to the gardens to do something. They do not come for a walk or see. But people come to work. And then that's the best way to involve citizens, right? Citizens cannot be spectators, but citizens have to be actors in the territory. So the best way for communication between different people there is that these people have something to do… everyone must have a role, a role, some task, a task. That is the best way to communicate, right? Having something to do* (Miraflores Sur, May 2017, first participatory video process).

Nevertheless, a breakdown of communication between factions within Huerto del Rey Moro was one of the primary factors that led to the creation of La Boldina. Given the centrality of the theme of communication to the first participatory video process in 2016, the gardeners of La Boldina decided to revisit the issue of communication through the second participatory video process in 2017. Their stated aim was to and reflect on the different challenges and opportunities it provided in their new organisational configuration.

Much as in the urban gardens, members of La Boldina emphasised the idea of communication through work and action as well as the importance of face-to-face communication:

> *I believe it lies in the eyes. Being able to have time to look into someone's eyes… People are able to interact with each other and truly communicate as opposed to the Internet where you don't have this communication. You can't look at someone in the eyes through the Internet* (male gardener, Triana, May 2017, second participatory video process).

Beyond these overlapping ideas between the two video processes, gardeners in La Boldina spoke frequently and openly about the importance of communicating emotions, and the importance of creating a community in which people can exchange knowledge and reflections. As one gardener in La Boldina explained,

> *I think learning to communicate your emotions is very important. Emotional intelligence is one of the most important things. Communication and non-verbal communication. I want to communicate certain things and I feel like I communicate it better through my actions instead of through my words. You can't always communicate what you feel simply through words. You must work to show your emotions. We're trying to communicate as a group and as individuals* (male gardener, undisclosed location, May 2017, second participatory video process).

At the same time, the group recognises the challenge of communication within a diverse group. Whilst the group is not as diverse as the community in Huerto del Rey Moro, one member of La Boldina still identified a cultural "lack of ability to listen and hear" which can lead to communication being "completely lost" (male gardener, Triana, May 2017, second participatory video process).

Overall, it seems that managed communication plays far less critical role in La Boldina than in Huerto del Rey Moro. Some of the close personal relationships between the group existed before La Boldina, whilst others are developing within the naturally communicative space. In this way, the relationship between communication and self-organisation more closely resembles Miraflores Sur than Huerto del Rey Moro.

In La Boldina, the natural, horizontal communication between the members is part of what allows their organisation to adapt so quickly and respond to new issues, ideas and opportunities as they arise. What is new however for the group, and did not exist in Huerto del Rey Moro, is the energy and strategic decision to try to communicate with a wide audience, repositioning the gardeners not as productive workers in a space, but social, political, and ecological activists within the city.

Urban Agriculture and *Autogestion* in Seville

This Chapter has argued firstly that people's motivations for urban gardening are a strong indicator of the forms of self-organisation and community governance that emerge; gardeners' social or ecological motivations for participating in urban gardens are can be sources of conflict and faction-forming rather than solidarity. Secondly, it has argued that communication is a critical issue for both enabling and constraining self-organisation in the urban gardens. And thirdly, it argues that the various modes of self-organisation impact significantly on the spatial organisation of the gardens and their associated networks.

For Lefebvre, *autogestion*, self-organisation and self-management, was an imperative. It is the means by which urban inhabitants can lay claim to urban space and realise their right to the city. In Seville's urban gardens we can see a variety of modes of self-organisation that variously enable and constrain gardeners', and other residents', capacities to self-organise in the political sense that Lefebvre intended. For this reason, gardens should not be interpreted as inherently apt spaces for self-organisation, but rather that they are spaces that are defined materially, spatially, and socially through the distinct modes of self-organisation that emerge.

By looking across the urban gardens and La Boldina, we can see that people's motivations for urban gardening are closely linked to the forms of self-organisation that occur, and the corresponding management and decision-making structures. In Huerto del Rey Moro and La Boldina, we can also see strong links between gardeners' desires to work in nature, according to permaculture principles or not, and the organisational structures that have emerged in the space. In Huerto del Rey Moro these motivations manifest as spatial divisions and the segregation of the garden into distinct areas. In response La Boldina has started to think and work at the city-level and have organised themselves in a way that maximises their capacity to do so.

By looking across the cases we can also see that the relationship between communication and self-organisation is more nuanced. In Miraflores Sur and La Boldina, the strong personal relationships between the participants mitigates the need for a more formalised democratic process. In Miraflores this has led to a lack of dynamic change, whilst in La Boldina this has created a space in which more personal, emotional issues, as well as broader social missions, can be spontaneously discussed. La Boldina emerged from a breakdown of communication in Huerto del Rey Moro. However, the new configuration has eased tensions within the space, and made it easier for the permaculture gardeners to work in a way and on projects that they choose. Different levels and modes of communication, within spaces and communities has been critical in creating their distinctive character in Seville, and it is by extending the approach to communication and self-organisation from Huerto del Rey Moro to the city-level, that La Boldina can potentially have the greatest impact in the city.

The forms of self-organisation in each of the gardens is not necessarily radical, and in the case of Miraflores, actively mitigate or quell any enthusiasm for significant change. However, these self-organised communities are creating spaces in which both personal, intimate thoughts, as well as grander political ideas can be brought and shared. These communities are not achieving *autogestion* in the way that Lefebvre intended, but they are actively and purposefully experimenting with new forms of self-organisation and self-management.

For this reason the concept of Lefebvre's articulation of *autogestion* is has limited value in helping us to understand the processes of self-organisation and self-management in and around urban community gardens. Whilst cases such as Huerto del Rey Moro make compelling examples of Lefebvrian ideas about collective organisation and appropriation of

urban space, the form observable modes of *autogestion*, (if we can call it that at all) are too narrow, and too specific to the culture of the spaces. Moreover, the dynamics of *autogestion* observable in the gardens are too context specific, too embedded in garden-level interpersonal and identity politics, conflicts, interactions and exchanges to be captured by the sweeping idea of *autogestion*. However, as suggested in the introduction to this Chapter, by augmenting the idea of *autogestion* with more critical conceptions of communication, power and networks, it may be possible to articulate more comprehensively the significance of *autogestion* for understanding urban gardens, and the potentials of urban gardens for realising territorial *autogestion*.

The self-organisation of the Huerto del Rey Moro community may yet have profound impacts towards territorial *autogestion* at the neighbourhood- or even city-levels, however this was not identifiable through this research. One such mechanism that this may occur is through collectives and networks such as La Boldina, whereby the modes of self-management from one concentrated garden can be disseminated, socially and spatially, across the city. The following Chapter considers in more depth the potential of the group La Boldina, and the significance of permaculture for the ways that they have started to learn and engage with the city.

Chapter 7: Emerging Modes of Learning and Engaging with the City through Urban Agriculture

The previous Chapter examined the processes of self-organisation in and around urban community gardens in Seville. This Chapter explores the ways that these forms of self-organisation are giving rise to new modes of thinking and raise new opportunities for learning and engaging with the city more broadly, beyond urban agriculture and community green spaces.

In the first part of the Chapter I position this research in the context of existing critical learning literature. In the second section, I outline some forms of learning that occur in Seville's urban community gardens, drawing on fieldwork conducted in Huerto del Rey Moro, Miraflores Sur and various gardens cultivated by La Boldina. In the third and fourth sections I examine the ways in which the introduction of permaculture philosophy into Seville through the urban gardens, particularly La Boldina, is impacting on the gardeners and their networks. And in the final section I consider the extent to which these diverse forms can or should be considered in terms of the right to the city, and what a right to the city lens offers for better understanding the significance of these learning processes.

The aim of this Chapter is to explore the ways in which the idea of learning the city through urban agriculture can be interpreted as a socially and politically significant process that goes beyond acquiring new knowledge but relates also to conscientisation, identity-formation, and social mobilisation. To do this I draw not only on Lefebvre's idea of *connaissance* contained within the right to the city, but also more recent developments in critical geography, food sovereignty, and Participatory Action Research.

Lefebvre distinguished between knowing (*savoir*) and understanding (*connaissance*), which has more practical, and for him, political implications. For this reason, it is important to distinguish between *knowledge* and *learning*. The former can be thought of as an object that can come in many forms; produced and communicated in countless ways. Knowledge can also be considered binary in so far as it is held, or it is not. The latter, learning, is a process whereby knowledge is continuously constructed, circulated and contested by through relational processes. In order to examine critically the process of learning it is important to consider the learners. This is a question that goes beyond pedagogies, rather it encourages us to explore the multitude ways that people engage with processes of knowledge production and exchange.

Learning is individual, based on individual experience and interpretation of events. But it is also collective, based on the ways that ideas are communicated, circulated, valued and contested by communities. Communities in this sense are not necessarily the proximal,

personal communities such as those in urban community gardens; rather they can comprise communities of place, of interest, and practice, amongst many others. For this reason, new ideas, either emerging from within a community or introduced from outside, can cause profound shifts in the ways that learning occurs; not only introducing new knowledge, but also new knowledges; new ways of thinking. Innovations, new ideas, and new philosophies can begin narrowly in one sector but can impact on individuals and communities more broadly in a way that is analogous to a paradigm shift.

The idea of learning the city as a continuous, lived and heterogenous process is a relatively recent one. Colin McFarlane's book, '*Learning the City'* (2011), was one of the first attempts to critically and systematically unpack what it means to learn a city as a complex and power-laden social process. McFarlane recognises that learning the city is more than acquiring knowledge about a space. Rather it is the continuous, relational process whereby knowledge is formed, shared and contested by all urban inhabitants. In this way, learning the city concerns not only the production and communication of knowledge, but issues of power and identity across networked urban actors. As McFarlane (2011:3) writes,

> "If knowledge is the sense that people make of information, that sense is a practice that is distributed through relations between people, objects and environment ... learning is as much about developing perceptions through engagement with the city as it is about creating knowledge."

To a limited extent, ways of learning the city can be planned for, designed, and mapped. Governmental, citizen-managed and private institutions can document and disseminate information about an urban area through maps, websites, and information campaigns. However, the majority of what constitutes urban learning occurs incidentally, through each urban inhabitants continuous, spontaneous interactions with one another and with the city. For example, understanding of labour markets comes primarily through looking for work; knowledge of neighbourhoods comes from walking and spending time in them. Thus, the ways we learn the city depend not only on the information we have access to, but the values, narratives, biases and memories that we already possess. Each of these elements is continuously supported and challenged by our day-to-day interactions, through direct and tacit communication, with other urban inhabitants.

Within the field of urban development planning, there exists a substantial discourse that critically examines planning pedagogies. Scholars such as Vanesa Watson, Gautam Bhan, and Abdoumaliq Simone have challenged urban planners and educators to be critical of the 'who' as much as the 'how' of planning education; how do the identities of the planners entrench or challenge dominant global binaries of North and South, rich and poor, masculinity and femininity, amongst many others. Allen et al (2018) emphasise the potentials of "co-learning" as a way of framing and mapping the multidirectional learning processes that can emerge between planners, policy-makers, academics and citizen groups engaged in urban

development planning issues.

Some of the most creative research around the theme of learning comes from the broad field of academics and practitioners involved in Participatory Action Research (PAR), outlined in Chapter 3. Within the more narrow field of research on participatory video-making, practitioners such as Chris Lunch (2007) have emphasised the transformative potentials of "dynamic community-led learning".

Social movement theorists have also recognised the transformative potentials of learning "from the ground up" (Choudry & Kapoor, 2010) and "by doing" (Maeckelbergh 2011) as a way of constructing, prefiguratively, new forms of decision-making and governance. The idea that horizontal social movements and political networks offer new spaces and opportunities to learn is an attractive one. Urban scholars such as McFarlane (2009) have framed social movements such as Slum/Shack Dwellers International (SDI), as primarily "learning movements".

Within the international agroecology and food sovereignty discourses the themes of learning and education have received significant attention in recent years. Scholars have critically unpacked the relationships between learning and practice in shifting to more sustainable forms of production (Braun & Bogdan, 2016); processes of experiential learning (Francis et al, 2011); reflective learning (Francis et al 2015); and social learning processes (Schneider et al, 2009). Scholars such as Levkoe (2006) have also considered the ways in which people might "learn democracy" through engaging in food struggles. Within this discourse there also exists a small amount of research that explores the urban dimensions of social learning and education. Crosley (2013), for example, explores the role of the food justice movement in advancing urban environmental education. Elsewhere Meek et al (2013) proposes a "political ecology of education and critical food systems education frameworks," drawing on various urban and rural agricultural projects in the USA, recognising that "institutionalization can be the death knell for critical food systems education" (Ibid: 16).

There also exists a significant body of scholarship within the urban agriculture discourse that emphasises the forms of learning that are specific to urban community gardens. A common thread in this literature is the recognition that urban gardeners routinely learn through a diversity of processes: from one another (Barthel et al., 2010); through institutional learning programmes (Sheri et al., 2009); as well as informal and incidental learning processes (Foley 1999).

Scholars such as Pierre Walter (2013) have approached learning in urban community gardens through a critical pedagogical lens, emphasising their significance as sites of public pedagogies (Sandlin, et al., 2011), as well as "more holistic, cosmological notions of transformational learning" (Walter, 2013: 522).

> "It appears that learning in community gardens is not only cognitive, but also emotional, spiritual, sensory and physical. Moreover, it seems that such learning can be collective, constructivist, synergistic and transformative for some" (Ibid: 534)

Urban gardens have also been recognised as spaces of intergenerational learning (Della Valle & Corsani, 2010). Hake (2017), for example, provides a comprehensive review of the modes of intergenerational learning identifiable in the gardens, including the socialisation of children and young people.

Beyond the literature that focuses on modes of learning within urban community gardens, there exists a small body of scholarship that considers the significance of these modes of learning beyond the gardens. Glover et al. (2005), for example, argues that these forms of learning can be significant for developing citizenship, and Bendt et al. (2013) argues that learning in urban gardens can play a critical role in reconnecting urban inhabitants with the biosphere. However there remains a lacuna in the literature regarding the significance of the diverse forms of learning in urban community gardens at the level of the city.

This Chapter aims to address this gap by drawing on the idea of the right to the city to trace how learning approaches that emerge in the gardens are translated to other processes in the city. Specifically, the Chapter looks at how forms of learning in urban gardens, particularly Huerto del Rey Moro, have influenced the philosophy and work of La Boldina, who operate at the city-level. In doing so this Chapter will examine the ways that these diverse forms of learning are leading to insights and action beyond the urban gardens.

This Chapter aims to contribute to academic discourse at the nexus of critical learning, urban agriculture, and community-led participatory research. The Chapter focuses not on the ways that urban agriculture groups are learning, but the dynamic relationship between learning and their agricultural practices. This is critical if we are, on one hand to better articulate the social and political significance of urban community gardens and, on the other hand, identify the distinct opportunities for forms of learning the city that are specific to urban agriculture and urban community gardens.

On the theme of learning this Chapter attempts to answer two questions. The first question is: to what extent are distinct modes of learning emerging from the practice of urban agriculture? The second question is: how do these specific modes of learning relate to broader processes of learning the city: how are urban gardeners learning; how are they learning through agriculture; and what opportunities does this raise for transforming the city, spatially, socially and institutionally? Specifically, this Chapter explores the significance of permaculture for generating new ways of learning and engaging the city for La Boldina.

Collective Learning in Urban Community Gardens

How do gardeners in Huerto del Rey Moro learn? And how do they learn the space? These are two distinct but important questions. To answer the first question, we can examine how learning occurs consciously and unconsciously within the garden. To answer the second, it is important to look more closely at the ways in which individuals build up an understanding of the material and social processes that define the garden.

It is important to recognise the centrality of conscious learning to the gardeners, in the sense of sharing knowledge and developing skills. In Huerto del Rey Moro, in spite of the signs and blackboards, and notices located around the entrance to the garden, the majority of learning takes place through conversation and 'by doing'. Throughout 2016-17 the garden had a regular schedule of workshops, for example, on bread-making, permaculture, and beekeeping, generally for adults and occasionally for children. The workshops took place over one to three hours and included anywhere from five to twenty people. Workshops for children took place on *fiesta* days such as *Barrio Abierto*, and often included a talk or presentation as well as interactive elements, such as finding plants or insects in the garden. In spite of the weekly programme of workshops and planned learning activities, when asked about their reasons for coming to the garden, many of the gardeners talked about coming to learn, not necessarily in organised workshops, but by engaging informally and sharing work with other people:

> *I'm an actor, and you always have some free time when you're not working, and I spend it coming to the garden to learn. This serves me as a meeting place to communicate better with others, to learn about plants, return to old knowledge that I had from university, botany* (male gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, May 2016, first participatory video process).

> *It's quite curious because when I first came to the garden it was not a conscious decision. I came because a friend, an Italian friend, was making pizza here one day and asked if I wanted to learn. I said yes and discovered this amazing space. It's interesting because I was struggling, and I had many desires and intentions of learning and creating a different reality inside this society and it's like everything was concentrated in this garden. Why? I don't know but here we are* (interview with female gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, June 2016).

The gardeners from Huerto del Rey Moro and Miraflores Sur both emphasise the learning processes within the garden, in terms of learning to grow food, care for the garden, and in terms of passing on knowledge to children. In Miraflores Sur, each gardener that comes to the garden with some knowledge strengthens the collective understanding of cultivation:

> *[Learning] has evolved to be better, we have a better culture. Because at first people did not know much, when first we started. But we have watched and studied. And*

> *there are many new organic farming techniques that have been brought* (male gardener, Miraflores Sur, April 2016, first participatory video process).
>
> *Here are gardeners who have come to the gardens without knowing anything about agriculture, and they have learned. Here they have learned from other citizens and now are real experts in agriculture* (interview with Raul Puente Asuero, Miraflores Sur, May 2016).

Historically, both gardens have had links to local schools, and have made a concerted effort to engage young people. In Huerto del Rey Moro, this was through engagement with local teachers, who brought primary school-aged children to the site every week for outdoors education, including cultivating a small area of the garden. This arrangement no longer exists formally, but many of the parents introduced to the garden through the programme are still regular visitors with their children to the site. Members of the assembly have argued that this form of outdoor education has had profound impacts on the children, not only in terms of the knowledge that they attain during the visits to the garden, but also in terms of changing their attitudes towards food and the natural environment (interview with female gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, May 2017).

In Parque de Miraflores the school programme became one of the main pillars of the initial Miraflores Sur gardens project after the City Hall became involved in 1991. The Park and Gardeners' Associations have maintained close links with several local schools and put aside a large area of the site as 'school gardens'. Following the financial crisis, funding for this programme was cut significantly by the City Hall, and there is currently no educational programme. However, the land that was put aside for school gardens has not been reallocated to individual gardeners like the other formerly communal areas, and there is an expectation amongst the gardeners that the programme will resume. Similar to in Huerto del Rey Moro, the gardeners perceive a significant impact on the children's education. However, it is beyond the scope of this study to examine the nature or extent of this impact.

> *Sure, [the schools gardens have] a social impact that results in benefits like good treatment of nature, knowledge of nature, changing eating habits and learning about the environment. In addition, school gardens are like a tool or a door, allowing you to enter the knowledge of nature in an easy way for a child to understand* (Interview with the Head of the Parque de Miraflores Association, Miraflores Sur, June 2016).

Whilst these forms of learning – with school children and between gardeners – are important, they do not represent a necessarily innovative approach to learning, and to a great extent, have come to be expected in and around urban gardens not only in Seville but in other European cities.

More significant however, are the modes of learning in the garden that exist outside of conscious, planned educational strategies. One of the distinct modes of learning that exists in

the gardens associated with La Boldina and in Huerto del Rey Moro, related to the importance of a safe space to experiment and to "make mistakes". These experiments not only help to foster a community around the gardens but contribute to its distinctive material character.

Experiments can be material, in terms of the structures like the dome, oven, shelters and *biorollos,*[23] in Huerto del Rey Moro. They can relate to food, in terms of seed saving, fermentation, and preservation. And they can be organisational, such as the experiments in participatory workshops through special assemblies. These experiments are important, not only as an effective way to address issues, but as a way of building innovations that can be of use in the wider city. As one gardener explained:

> *I use [my time in the garden] to experiment, to teach, to know people, and having this garden in the neighbourhood is really important… The idea is that we meet here, we learn, we share, we experiment, and we try to help other initiatives in the city* (interview with male gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, May 2016).

In one notable growing experiment, members of La Boldina have succeeded in growing an orange tree on asphalt using tiers of soil and compost supported by concentric circles of cinder blocks in Huerta de la Santa Marina. The experiment aimed to show what was possible in terms of growing plants, specifically edible plants, within the city, on land that is not widely considered useable for agriculture.

Critical to this culture of experimentation is the collective safe space for making mistakes. Huerto del Rey Moro does not have a homogenous community, and there exist significant differences of opinion between factions in the garden as detailed in the previous Chapter. However, even between diverse groups there exists a mutual tolerance for experimentation and error-making, which is critical to the culture of the space:

> *For me this space has allowed us to experiment with permaculture, but we also want this space to be open for those who don't share the criteria and opinion of permaculture. We want them to use it for ecological agriculture without the use of chemicals and pesticides. We don't want anyone to feel left out. The orchard is a space for environmental experimentation, in fact, life experimentation* (interview with female gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, April 2017).

This safe space enables and supports new forms of learning that are implicitly discouraged in formal education. The time and space to work on collective solutions to profound as well as

[23] Large arches constructed from pliable wood and plant material used to bound growing spaces. The arches support climbing plants with the aim of trapping moisture and increasing the humidity within the garden. They are used both within the permaculture tradition and in other low-impact, low-intervention growing practices.

trivial issues supports the idea that the gardens are significant within the city as collective learning spaces.

Perhaps the most important opportunity for learning amongst gardeners in Huerto del Rey Moro and La Boldina relate to agroecology and permaculture. For some, the gardens represent an opportunity to revisit knowledge from childhood and from experiences living and working in the countryside:

> *Just like in other spaces like Huerto del Rey Moro we're able to exchange our own agricultural knowledge. I've gotten my knowledge from my family. This is a time where this curiosity is awakening in people. People are returning to things that are authentic and food, water, earth, wind, and fire are where people are beginning this change* (male gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, June 2017, second participatory video process)

In both Huerto del Rey Moro and Miraflores Sur, gardeners are continuously exchanging knowledge and learning about agroecology, and in the case of Huerto del Rey Moro, permaculture. Each garden has its own vernacular mode of production, that has developed from the skills and experience of those involved. In Huerto del Rey Moro, conversations that begin with ways to grow tomatoes can quickly become discussions on urban air quality, water management, or global as well as local agri-business dominated food systems.

The learning that occurs can be both deeply practical and deeply theoretical. For example, La Boldina frequently discuss the role of the effect of water management on the water table, and the implications this has on the types of plants that might grow that might be able to access the deep groundwater. This is despite having no measurable way of observing groundwater levels or the water table and no contact with engineers or hydrologists working in this area. In a sense, learning about root structures, as well as hydrological and nutrient cycles represents another form of learning, another epistemology; one that is on one hand emergent and collective, and on the other, unsystematic and unscientific. This form of learning neither supersedes nor validates other forms of learning through urban agriculture, but rather complements other social learning systems that have emerged in the urban gardens.

The constellation of modes of learning – mutual, collective, practical, horizontal, formal and informal, scientific and unscientific, amongst others – represents a concentration of opportunities within the gardens. Not only in terms of alternative pedagogies and alternative forms of learning, but also in terms of the diverse community that can and do come to learn from one another in the spaces. Very few gardeners or local residents are involved in every activity in either Miraflores Sur or Huerto del Rey Moro, but the diversity of forms of engagement means that few regular visitors to either site are not involved in one or more learning processes. In this way learning has become more than the acquiring of knowledge; it

is a mode of communication and interaction, and a catalyst for community-building. As one gardener explained,

> *The solidarity, the reciprocity. A way of interacting with one another. It's a form of interaction with people. It's the quality of the relationships we build that has really connected everyone with this project* (male gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, June 2017, second participatory video process).

The question becomes, is this constellation of modes of learning unique to urban community gardens or more generally indicative of community-managed projects and spaces. The many instances and forms of learning observable in the gardens as well as in La Boldina are significant in so far as they engage a diverse group of people in a continuous, dynamic, community-led learning process. However, the majority of modes of learning are not necessarily specific to urban gardens. Community-led learning exists in countless forms in social movements; the international agroecology training and capacity building practices of La Via Campesina, for example represent a form of community-led learning, by small-scale farmers, for small scale farmers (Rosset et al, 2011). Other urban social movements also combine technical learning with emotional support and conscientisation, such as *Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca* (PAH) (Platform for People Affected by Mortgages) in Spain (Fernandez-Wulff & Yap, 2018).

However, there is a form of learning that is unique to urban gardens, and observable in each of the sites in Seville, the holistic form of learning around agroecology and permaculture. In some cases, this engagement with the ideas and philosophies of agroecology and permaculture as growing systems, has had profound impacts on the ways that the gardeners understand, and are beginning to engage with, the wider city.

The Significance of Permaculture: Learning from Nature

Permaculture is a holistic set of social and agricultural design principles that seeks to integrate people into the natural environment in a way that maximises biodiversity and ecological resilience; it is a philosophy of working with rather than against nature. The term was proposed by Bill Mollison (1988), however the approach draws extensively on low-impact and indigenous farming techniques from around the world. Permaculture broadly defined by a set of principles, which should be considered and applied within a space and a context; Mollison emphasised the integration of design for food, energy, water systems as well as human settlements. The permaculture discourse is heterogeneous. Some scholars and activists have sought to emphasise the potentials of permaculture for sustainability (Veteto & Lockyer, 2008), while others have emphasised its spiritual potentials (Gibsone & Bang, 2015), or its significance for food sovereignty (Giraldo del Lopez et al, 2017). This means that in any

given context, a local interpretation of permaculture is likely to depend on other existing ideas and values. As one of the gardeners explained,

> *Each person has their own points of view and differences in perception as to what permaculture is* (male gardener, Hinojos, May 2017, second participatory video process)

Permaculture was introduced to Huerto del Rey Moro by an Italian gardener who arrived in Seville a decade ago. Permaculture training previously existed in Seville in the form of workshops and training managed by the non-governmental organisation, *Ecologistas en Accion* (Ecologists in Action), at their permanent garden in San Jeronimo in the north of the city. However, these trainings were relatively small-scale, and the ideas have not been transmitted to other sites around the city. The gardeners that now constitute La Boldina had no knowledge of the project in San Jeronimo, and indeed, believed that permaculture was not practiced in Andalucía. Whilst this is very unlikely to be the case, it demonstrates that permaculture has been a marginal practice in the region until recently.

In Seville, the permaculture gardeners of Huerto del Rey Moro and La Boldina talk openly and frequently about their permaculture vision. For some permaculture means supporting the development of a self-sustaining ecosystem (female gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro May 2016, first participatory video process). For others it is about minimising the strain on natural resources. And for some it is about letting nature work as it should to grow food and provide ecosystem services for communities in a way that frees up people's time for other activities. For others still, the idea of permaculture is consonant with self-sufficiency. Overall however, the vernacular vision of the group is related most consistently to ideas of sustainable development and the collective stewardship of nature:

> *Permaculture is an opportunity to create a sustainable human habitat and for sustainable development. Working with nature and not against it. Taking care of the Earth, our mother. Taking care of people who are on this earth and sharing the resources* (male gardener, Hinojos, May 2017, second participatory video process).

As part of their permaculture philosophy, the theme of water is central to La Boldina, both in its practical activities and in its more abstract philosophical approach. Practically, water management is the primary focus of their permaculture cultivation. In Huerto del Rey Moro in 2016, the gardeners that would go on to form La Boldina spent as much time burying large stones and sifting soil to enhance water movement within the site, as they did working directly with the plants. At the same time gardeners talk about a "connection between the water and the social" (male gardener, Casa del Pumarejo, June 2017, second participatory video process). La Boldina see social and ecological processes as enmeshed; influencing and reflecting one another. Their perceptions of these deep connection lead some gardeners talk about rain as a "baptism".

One culmination of these ideas was in the “Perma-formance” conducted by La Boldina as part of the *Barrio Abierto Fiesta* in May 2017. *Barrio Abierto* (Open Neighbourhood) is an annual festival in part of the Macarena district within the Old Town. On one day each year more than twenty community-based organisations, artist and artisan workshops, and community centres open their doors to the public. Thousands of people visit the neighbourhood throughout the day, and there are parties in the streets until late at night.

In 2017, La Boldina delivered a public performance through the streets, beginning in Huerto del Rey Moro and ending in the square outside Casa del Pumarejo. The performance took the form of a story, told by one member, Jaime, across four different sites, beginning in the garden. Other members of La Boldina played music and danced through the street to accompany the story and lead a crowd of people towards the Casa. During the walk Jaime told stories about water and about Boldo. The stories brought together many of the themes that are central to La Boldina. For example in Plaza del Pumarejo, he told a story about a man turning into water and experiencing the flows of water through the city:

> *This water droplet began to grow. It grew right in my hand. Little by little that water slowly grew into a puddle. It spread and spread until I had to cup my other hand, trying to hold in all of the water. The water kept growing and growing. It began spilling through my fingers and my wrists. The water began to spill down my arms until it formed a stream. This stream hit the ground. In that moment, I felt something truly special. I felt as if I was falling over. As if I was melting and falling to the ground. I became the puddle of water. But the peace I felt quickly vanished. I slowly began drifting into a sewer. I tried my hardest trying to escape but it was impossible. I held my breath trying not to smell the wretched smell of the sewer. Then in that moment something miraculous happened. As I fell I got sucked through the earth. I went through the pavement and through the ground and was penetrating deep into the earth. I could feel and smell the fresh soil. I understood that I had reached the roots of the tree that was planted in the middle of the plaza. I began my slow and tranquil journey. Little by little I went up the roots and slowly became part of the tree* (Jaime Garcia Malo, Plaza del Pumarejo, May 2017, second participatory video process).

In poetic style, this story represents part of the fundamental philosophy of la Boldina, emphasising not only the relationships between people and the natural elements, but the inextricable connections; as one gardener often reminded the group, “we are made of water”. The ‘permaformance’ ended with the ritual planting of Boldo in the public square outside Casa del Pumarejo and the demonstration of a grey water filter, constructed by La Boldina in Huerto del Rey Moro, followed by a talk advocating for the remunicipalisation water by an academic from Universidad de Sevilla.

The aim of the performance was partly to raise awareness about the group and their cause, but the process of developing the story and choreographing it through the streets, was

important for the group in giving them a space to develop and articulate their vision for La Boldina, and for a greener, more water-conscious future in Seville.

Some gardeners in La Boldina also use natural systems to think about and learn about social processes. This occurs in two primary ways. The first is by looking at natural systems, specifically the management of natural systems such as water, as a way of evaluating social, political and economic structures according to the successes and shortcomings of the natural system's management. For some gardeners, this link is very abstract, derived from contemporary interpretations of historical processes. These gardeners emphasise the history of successful water management in the region and argue that it is not a sufficient priority and is managed poorly by today's institutions, as described in Chapter 4. For other gardeners, these observations lead to direct indictments of the privatisation of water management in Spain, and calls not only for remunicipalisation, but also a new approach to public water management that recognises the value of grey water for household as well as agricultural use.

The second way that gardeners use natural processes to learn about social processes is through analogy. These are not formal or even necessarily consistent analogies, but rather rely on perceived shared abstraction between natural and social processes, and an expectation that there are sufficient points in common between them to consider one complex system as analogous to the other. For example, the gardeners believe that the transmission of ideas through urban society is analogous to the spread of seeds and plants across a garden.

MacKinnon and Derickson (2012) warn communities and activists against applying natural processes analogously within their organisations, arguing in particular that the concept of *resilience* can be conservative when applied to social relations. However, in the case of La Boldina, this analogous form of learning is only one aspect of the complexity of relationships between permaculture principles and the collective. Rather than being a fixed or constraining mode of thinking, the gardeners are using analogy creatively and productively. The idea is not that social systems mirror ecological systems, but rather that by using one to explore the other it opens up new ways of thinking about complex themes.

Beyond organising themselves and their networks in a way that is analogous to natural networks of communication and exchange, the group have developed an epistemology that is analogous to natural systems and which has profoundly transformed their conceptualisation of permaculture and other learning systems. This epistemological framework, analogous to a 'forest' of knowledges, not only shapes how they interpret and engage with urban processes, but how they reflect upon their own positionality and their permaculture practices:

> *Society and power are like a forest. In the forest, you have many different types of greenery. Permaculture is just one type of tree. There are trees that, for example,*

represent academic knowledge. For some people, this knowledge ranks higher than permaculture. This is all based on the culture and principles that they learned at home when they were young which carries through with them when they grow up. They could say, "you know what? This branch of permaculture is casting a shadow on my academic knowledge tree." So they go and cut this branch off. This doesn't mean that permaculture is consuming the rest of the trees, it simply means that permaculture could be growing in spaces where other trees such as academic knowledge aren't blossoming... There are some people that have been at Huerto del Rey Moro and believe they should be growing in a certain direction. However, at the end of the day they're just another tree and must learn to live within a living forest (male gardener, Triana, May 2017, second participatory video process).

This analogy helps the gardeners to reflect on competing and contrasting perspectives regarding urban food production and conflicts within the city in terms of a pluralist epistemology. This epistemology not only makes the members of La Boldina more sensitive to difference, in contrast with some of the confrontational politics that defined Huerto del Rey Moro's monthly assemblies, but it has also helped them to justify and develop their sense of value in a permaculture approach, not only to gardening, but to urban living.

These ways of learning with and from nature have had several important implications for the ways that the group understand and learn the city. The first is in framing the city as a socio-ecological construct. As described in Chapter 2, Marxist scholars have defined cities as inevitable spatial concentrations of capital produced within the capitalist system. More recently urban political ecologists have built on Marxist foundations, emphasising the dual roles of socio-economic and ecological factors in the process of urbanisation. In this way, cities can be understood not only as spatialisations of capital flows, but as spatialisations of social and ecological metabolic flows, including of water, nutrients, micro fauna, and knowledge.

In La Boldina, we can see the emergence of a conception of the urban that considers the interrelations and connections between the social and ecological in equal measure. This is demonstrated through their discussions about the flows of water and energy through the city, and also through their practice, which seeks to build a grassroots movement of water-conscious gardeners in the city. Whilst not expressed explicitly in terms of urban political ecology, La Boldina are developing a conception of the city that reconciles social and ecological processes, as well as the often-contradictory relations between them.

One significant change between 2016 and 2017 has been the scale at which these discussions and efforts take place. When based in Huerto del Rey Moro the gardeners planned and worked at length to improve the water management of the space, firmly bounded by its walls. From 2017, the group began to discuss water not only at the neighbourhood- and

city-levels, but also in terms of the wider water catchment area that extends across the Province of Seville.

Secondly, the idea that social and ecological processes are deeply enmeshed has been extended to mean that disharmony in one system can be deleterious to the other. For La Boldina, this means that social development is closely tied to sustainable land management and caring for the environment; caring for people and caring for nature are closely intertwined:

> *That is one of the principles also in the garden culture: take care of people, take care of the land, and distribute resources. So I think this is a good place to start, identifying where there is too much of something and giving it to another place* (female gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, June 2017, second participatory video process).

Thirdly, from the idea that social and ecological processes are closely related, La Boldina, are learning about one system by observing the other. Sometimes this process is very abstract. For example, it can be expressed in broad terms such as coexisting with nature and learning from "the elements":

> *So is the relationship with the elements. With plants, how I'm telling you, learning to be with them, learn to act, not really to act, but to learn to interact, to listen. Now you can be with fire, be with plants, or with people* (male gardener, undisclosed location, May 2017).

On the other hand, these new insights, and new modes of learning, have very practical implications for the organisation, both in terms of their governance, management and strategic direction, as well as their conception of an urban permaculture.

The Outcomes of Learning Through Permaculture

What we can see in La Boldina is the emergence of a specifically urban, and specifically Andalusian, permaculture which reconciles classical permaculture principles with the local social, ecological and political urban contexts. Through engaging with permaculture in a multitude of ways – as practice, as analogy, as political philosophy – La Boldina are inspiring a nascent permaculture movement in Seville and generating new opportunities for engaging with the city. Most immediately this has changed the way that the gardeners think about the city as a connected whole, rather than an as a spatial aggregation of unconnected systems. For some of the gardeners, this new thinking has manifested specifically as antagonism towards the prevailing agribusiness dominated global food system:

> *[Previously in Hinojos] we could see a counter-position [to permaculture]. A counter position that is historical and cultural. Here we could see the corporate machine at*

play. Here they bred birds simply for meat for profit. There was a lack of balance and harmony (male gardener, Hinojos, May 2017, second participatory video process).

One of the most significant outcomes of the changes in thinking however regards the ways that the group thinks about aspects of urban life that are unrelated to the environment or food systems. For example, the group has started to collaborate with other urban associations such as *Asociacion Vecinal del Casco Norte de Sevilla*, (Neighbourhood Association of the Seville's North Old Town), an anti-gentrification movement. For some members of La Boldina, gentrification and urban displacement represent violent acts that disrupt and break the social, political and economic networks that characterise urban neighbourhoods. This disruption is understood as analogous to the effect that deep tilling, practiced almost universally in industrial agriculture breaks up benevolent networks of fungus and roots in the soil.

Another outcome of these learning processes is that some members of the group have started to occupy empty houses in Seville. The Macarena district has a prominent recent history of occupied buildings within the city.[24] Some of the members of La Boldina also lived in occupied buildings in Seville and elsewhere before the emergence of the group. However, the start of the group coincided with the occupation of an abandoned house in the North of Seville, that took on a particular significance for the group. Of the six people that lived permanently in the house in 2017, three are members of La Boldina. In the house they experiment with a range of permaculture practices including cultivation and seed saving. The house has also become a de facto meeting place for some members of La Boldina, where they plan together their activities, and share meals. Most significant however for this discussion are the ways in which the group began to draw on permaculture principles to justify their occupation and, as they saw it, their duty to restore the empty house.

The relationship between occupation and permaculture is contextually specific, and not necessarily an approach that can or should be widely replicated by permaculture practitioners. However, it provides a remarkable insight into the ways that permaculture is being transfigured and adapted in this local context, to meet local needs, in a way that is

[24] The most famous example is *Casas Viejas* House and community centre, occupied from 2001 to 2007, managed by *Centro Social Okupado Autogestion* (Occupied, Self-Managed Social Centre). The project took its name from the town of Casas Viejas in the Cadiz Province of Andalucía where fascist forces massacred anarchists and their families in 1933. Casas Viejas became a prominent social centre for young people, as well as hosting visiting anarchist and anti-globalization movement members from other cities. The group was evicted violently in 2007 and the building was immediately demolished. Members of the Casas Viejas group squatted a number of other disused buildings in the area, some of which have evolved into occupied community spaces, such as the women-only "Revo" squat, that still exist today.

culturally if not legally permissible, and yet has no tangible link to nature or food production. For some of the gardeners this connection is quite abstract:

> *We've come in with two projects. We'd like to do here are bringing back the memory of the lady who once lived here and also cultivate permaculture through plants and water. I see it as a project that is really aligned to my principles and values and those of permaculture* (male gardener, undisclosed location, May 2017, second participatory video process).

For others their restoration of the house is analogous to cycles of decay and restoration that occur in nature and they have the same moral and emotional imperative to restore unused houses that they do to compost waste food; making productive use of material waste as well as the socio-political opportunities that such a community space presents:

> *Well the house project is something that I wanted to do. To work on a green house. It was a community project that interested me. I can relate this to permaculture. It's about recovering a space, and an area that was abandoned. Like a certain sort of urban compost... It's about recovering this space so that we can live in and create life. Not allowing this property to die* (male gardener, undisclosed location, May 2017, second participatory video process).

The restoration activities are conducted collectively, using natural and reclaimed materials. The group are re-plastering exterior of the house, repainting the interior, and making it into a liveable and inviting place. This process of restoration can be understood as a logical progression of the narratives of restoration, identified in Huerto del Rey Moro the previous year and detailed in Chapter 4. However it is only in the organisational context that these narratives have extended beyond urban gardening.

They have also made a conscious effort to build positive relationships with the neighbours in the street. On one hand this is a practical step, common to occupied buildings, that decreases the risk of eviction or complaints to the police. On the other hand it also evidences further the centrality of networks and relationship building as a default, permaculture-inspired strategy to improve the urban environment.

The idea of permaculture has also informed the strategic direction of La Boldina. The way that the collective aims to increase its impact is not by scaling up the organisation or any of its initiatives, but by spreading ideas, building relationships with diverse groups, and inspiring urban inhabitants to participate in permaculture activities. The strategy is working. The number of sites that the group was working in has increased from seven in July 2017, to twenty by March 2018. Throughout 2017 the group continued to grow in a very decentralised fashion, with different members managing different projects at different rates.

It is important to note a minor tension within the group regarding the role of self-sufficiency. For some, permaculture and self-sufficiency go hand in hand. As in Huerto del Rey Moro, the group frequently discuss the importance of *autogestion* and autonomy. For some, it seems that permaculture has become a way of operationalising some of these ideas, in theory, if not in practice. Within the group there is no 'road-map' to self-sufficiency – the idea that they would be able, as a community, to produce all of their own food, fuel and water – but the idea is ever-present in discussions, having value as an ideal, if not a practically attainable goal, particularly in the urban context of Seville. For some members of the group the idea of self-sufficiency is synonymous with small communities and self-managed, small-scale food production.

For others the idea of self-sufficiency is expressed more in terms of building a social movement and building networks to contest the global industrial food system, and ultimately carve out social and political space away from the State. This is not a critical tension, and there is no fundamental contradiction between these associations. However it evidences some diversity and heterogeneity within the group's aspirations for transforming society.

The idea of creating a non-State-centric form of citizenship is implicit in much of La Boldina's discussions. For example, one member of the group expressed the idea that access to and the capacity to manage urban green spaces was a part of a sense of citizenship:

> *For a person to be well they need to be close to trees, close to plants, close to the land. When I am far from these things I feel like less of a citizen* (female gardener, Parque de Alamillo, May 2018, second participatory video process).

This resonates with what has been termed, agrarian citizenship (Wittman, 2009) within the food sovereignty movement. However, this is a distinctly urban articulation of the idea, depending as it does on access and usufruct of urban green spaces, rather than ownership of land or control of modes of production. This notion of citizenship is not State-centric; there is no discussion of the responsibilities of the City Hall to guarantee or defend citizens' right to urban green space. Rather, it is an idea of citizenship that depends on social networks of support, exchange, communication, and solidarity to be realised.

This is in accordance with anarchist conceptions of autonomy that "have emphasised the unequal power relations involved in everyday activities and interactions and have sought to develop forms of self-management that eschew, subvert, and challenge mechanisms and institutions of governance that structure everyday life" (Ince, 2012: 1653-4). This is to say that La Boldina are experimenting with conceptions of citizenship that do not rely on status, or the State, but on action, relationships, and a connection to the natural environment.

This is reflected in the complete absence of desire, on the part of La Boldina to engage with City Hall or other formal urban political processes. The group is entirely invisible to the City Hall; with the exception of Huerto del Rey Moro, none of the gardening projects associated

with La Boldina were included in the 2016-17 report of urban gardens in the city. In Huerto del Rey Moro there is a skepticism, but a more generally open attitude to dialogue with the City Hall. As one gardener explained:

> *A garden is a garden. It should not have a political colour… I do not want to see a flag, but everyone can come here and talk. If someone from the City Hall wants to enter, I don't think anyone would close the door. In fact I would like them to visit to see the forest in the city* (interview with male gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, April 2017).

In the case of La Boldina, the ways that they are learning about urban processes through permaculture is pushing them further and further from formal, mainstream politics, and towards a more self-managed and self-legitimising form of urban citizenship. I return to this issue in Chapter 9.

The process of learning the city through permaculture is a new one for the gardeners of Huerto del Rey Moro and La Boldina. However, it is already affecting the way they self-organise across a wide range of projects in and around Seville. There does not appear to be a significant change in the ways that the groups are engaging with formal institutions such as the City Hall. However there has been a significant development in terms of the number and diversity of other organised citizen networks with which they engage.

Most significant however is the idea of a form of citizenship that is dependent upon and in dynamic relation with a local, urban interpretation of permaculture philosophy. Permaculture has become a lens that allows groups of urban gardeners in Seville to identify new opportunities for action, as well as new responsibilities within the city. However, these opportunities are not exclusive to the permaculture community. But what is novel is the specific constellation of learning pathways associated with their urban permaculture practice.

Learning the City as a Right to the City

Overall this Chapter supports existing academic literature that details the unique and significant constellation of learning pathways in and around urban community gardens (Foley, 1999; Walter 2013). To some extent these learning processes are comparable to critical learning processes associated with the food sovereignty movement, outlined in the introduction to this Chapter. However, in the case of La Boldina the process of learning through permaculture has a distinctly urban character; learning the city through permaculture has opened new political, thematic, and strategic opportunities for the gardeners to engage with urban processes.

The primary contribution of this Chapter to the urban agriculture discourse is in examining the impact of these forms of learning, which emerged in the urban gardens, as they are translated and applied at the level of the city. These forms of learning could be critical not only for generating new ways of understanding and engaging with the city, but also for building solidarity between disparate urban and rural struggles. However I echo the call of Meek et al. (2017: 16) that further research is required, particularly a "deeper analyses of the pedagogical relations between [rural and urban] spaces."

As this Chapter has described, some of the gardeners of Huerto del Rey Moro and La Boldina are experimenting with important new forms of relationship building and engagement that extend beyond urban agriculture. Through both conscious and unconscious learning processes, the gardeners are creatively multiplying their knowledge to produce insights about urban development, the shortage of affordable housing, and water management in Andalucía, amongst other issues. But to what extent do these ways of learning contribute to the idea of learning the city? And does the right to the city offering anything that helps us to better understand the significance of this learning?

For Colin McFarlane, learning the city implies not only a critical reflection on the countless ways that we learn the city, but also on the positionality of the learners and the ways that the multiple, intersecting identities of the learners relate to existing social, political and economic power structures. Whilst La Boldina have begun a process by which new ways of learning the city are embedded in its organisational culture, and there exists a conscious sensitivity to difference, the group has not, so far, begun to conceptualise their work within wider urban relations. In order for the innovative forms of learning and insight that are emerging from the group to impact upon more structural and institutional politics within Seville, the group will need to look beyond its allies and their networks, and also reflect on the ways that their positionality impacts upon the ways in which they learn the city.

For Lefebvre, the idea of learning the city is an implicitly central dimension of the realisation of the right to the city; the democratisation of the city requires the democratisation of knowledge production and institutionalisation. In groups such as La Boldina, we can identify a process of collective, horizontal learning that challenges the learning linear and individualised conceptions of learning, and at the same time represents a holistic, socio-ecological vision for the urban environment. Perhaps the most significant opportunity that this form of learning represents is the new horizontal networks that are developed through ongoing learning processes; connecting and building solidarity between disparate urban struggles in a way that brings about reflection on the nature of urban space.

A critical conception of learning that draws on both Lefebvre's *connaissance*, as well as critical forms of learning, and participatory action research enables us to better understand the social and political significance of mobilised producer groups by drawing out the broader political significance of community-led, collective learning. On one hand this learning has

practical applications; by better understanding the city and its processes the urban gardeners have a greater capacity to engage with other urban actors, such as the City Hall. In the case of La Boldina, this increased capacity, through the production, exchange and consolidation of practical, actionable knowledge, enables the group to be more strategic in its activities, choosing its campaigns and projects more carefully in order to have the greatest possible impact in the City.

On the other hand, through the lens of the right to the city, these diverse forms of collective learning can be understood as part of the production of the city itself. Gardeners are creating social value and use value by reconstituting disused and neglected material spaces as valuable sites of potential; where new gardens can host new communities within the city. To some extent, the argument in this Chapter is an extension of the argument made by Glover et al. (2005), that the diversity of forms of learning in gardens can contribute towards the development of citizenship. La Boldina are developing an active conception of citizenship, rooted in participation and urban ecology. What I have argued is that through the lens of the right to the city, we can situate this conception in other, fundamentally urban, processes. The diverse forms of learning described here are not only significant for developing citizenship and reconnecting urban inhabitants with the biosphere (Bendt, et al., 2013), but represent a new lens through which to engage with the urban reality. As this thesis has described, the production of the city is a dynamic and contested process, but by developing new and collective ways to learn and perceive the city, the urban gardeners enhance their claims to it.

Chapter 8: A Critical Reflection on Participatory Video-Making in Participatory Action Research

This research used primarily a participatory methodology. It is important to reflect critically on the nature and limitations of participation in the research process and the use of participatory video-making in research. The aim of this Chapter is to problematise the distinct phases of participatory video-making within a framework of Participatory Action Research within a UK three-year PhD cycle. This Chapter aims to achieve three things. The first is to contribute to the growing methodological discourse regarding participatory video. The second is to recognise the tensions that arose from the way this project has attempted to reconcile diverse epistemological positions within a coherent theoretical narrative; qualifying and acknowledging the collective work that has gone into this thesis. The third is to outline what I interpret to be unresolved but critical tensions between community-led, participatory research and Marxist scholarship, particularly regarding urban political ecology.

There exists a substantial critical discourse regarding participatory research. Scholars have identified the potentials of participatory research to instrumentalise participants, and entrench existing power dynamics within a community (Cooke & Kothari, 2001). At the same time there exists a vast amount of literature from both academic and non-academic sources, identifying the empowering and transformative potentials of Participatory Action Research (PAR), through increasing the voice and agency of marginalised groups, and recognising the diverse knowledges that exist outside of academic institutions, detailed in Chapter 3. Participatory research is a catch-all term that has been used to describe a diversity of approaches to research; ranging from entirely community-led processes to some research projects that contain participatory elements but are largely indistinguishable from other qualitative research.

Put very simply, research projects, including PhD projects, have a natural project cycle comprising the following phases: project design; data collection; analysis; write-up; dissemination. However, each of these phases may involve vastly different processes across disciplines. And within the PAR tradition, a research project may contain multiple iterations of this project cycle. PAR emphasises the heuristic importance of reflection a distinct phase both within and across cycles of research.

This research project used participatory video-making, alongside other qualitative methods, outlined in Chapter 3, in the project design, data collection, reflection, and to a lesser extent for the data analysis phases. This pattern was repeated for each of the two Research Cycles. This Chapter draws on my auto-ethnographic account of the research process, recorded in a field diary and developed through the write-up process, as well as reflections from gardeners on the participatory video-making processes.

Participatory Action Research: Contradictions and Opportunities

In this section I reflect on how *opportunism* and *identity* influenced the process and conceptual development of my research project. Specifically, I reflect on the ways that the relationships I built during my research in Seville and other places, shaped and focused the project's methodological and theoretical direction.

This research project was developed in response to a call from Coventry University for PhD applications related to the cluster of themes: *Place*, *Food Sovereignty, Resilience and participatory-video*. At the time of the call I was working at the Bartlett Development Planning Unit (DPU), University College London, contributing towards a range of action research projects using participatory methods. I had also previously completed my Master of Science Degree at the DPU, writing my dissertation on the subject of urban food sovereignty. I therefore submitted a proposal to Coventry University that emphasised the urban manifestations of themes in the call. Specifically, I proposed a research project that looked at the interrelations between issues of Place, Identity, and Food Sovereignty in the context of urban agriculture projects, using participatory video-making as my primary methodology.

In the time between being offered a place to study and beginning my PhD, I refocused the project towards the themes of food sovereignty, urban agriculture, and the right to the city. This shift reflected some of the material that I had been reading and was introduced to by faculty at the DPU. My hypothesis at this point was that there was a number of shared, central themes as well as a political resonance between the food sovereignty and right to the city discourses, and that by exploring this relationship in the context of urban agriculture – a practice that straddled both urban and food politics – I might be able to make a contribution to separate two discourses, which rarely overlap.

During my first year of the PhD I critically read literature from both the food sovereignty and the right to the city discourses. I developed a number of general as well as a specific research questions for interrogating the relationship between the concepts and discourses; how, for example, is land conceived within each discourse? During that year I also visited and started to build relationships with community-based organisations, NGOs, and academics working in the field of urban agriculture in London, Toronto, and Seville.

I visited Toronto in November 2015 and spent time with the Food Policy Council as well as several community-based as well as commercial urban food growing projects. In London I spent time with the Community Food Growers Network (CFGN), an umbrella organisation for community-centred urban agricultural projects across London, and Audacious Veg, a food-growing social enterprise providing education to vulnerable and/or unemployed young adults in East London. I also travelled to Seville as part of a Seed Exchange in 2015 as a guest of Garden Organic and the Heritage Seed Library, described in Chapter 3.

During my first year I began to recognise a tension between my carefully drafted research questions relating to food sovereignty and the right to the city, and the issues and interests of the groups and communities that I had spoken with. By the end of my first year I had decided that Toronto was not an appropriate site for this research given the large amount of research already published on urban food growing in the city as well as the difficulties I encountered in connecting with groups working on themes relating to food sovereignty and the right to the city.

I maintained the relationship with CFGN throughout my PhD period, spending one day a week over four months in 2016 undertaking a participatory video-making process with vulnerable adults at Audacious Veg. I have also contributed to CFGN's work in other areas and attended a number of meetings as an interested individual, rather than as a researcher. Over the course of my 3-year project, some members of CFGN have started to work more closely with faculty at the Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience, contributing further to the relationship.

I decided during the participatory video-making process with Audacious Veg that the organisation was not a good fit for my research. The organisation functions as a specialist commercial grower that offers government-subsidised Traineeships for young adults. In a sense, the idea of community, which I felt was critical to connecting the ideas of food sovereignty and the right to the city, was missing. However, I was keen to complete the participatory video-making process, which allowed me to spend time with and learn from urban food growers, discuss issues relating to food systems in and around London, and to develop my skills as a participatory video-maker. The short film produced with Trainees on the project is available on YouTube and the Audacious Veg website.[25]

Throughout my first year, I maintained contact with gardeners and academics that I had met during my visit to Seville. During my first period of scoping fieldwork, I had visited two gardens that resonated with my developing research questions, as well as the themes of food sovereignty and the right to the city: Miraflores Sur and Isla de Tercia. Isla de Tercia was a large nascent project on undeveloped land in urban periphery, located on what was formerly the overflow car park for the 1992 Sevilla Expo. In 2014 a cooperative of landless agricultural workers gained access to the site to turn it into a commercial vegetable growing project. Throughout the year I discussed my project over email with members of both sites and arranged to return to the city for a second period of fieldwork at the start of my second year in April 2016.

On returning to Seville, I was disappointed to learn that it was not going to be possible to work closely with the members of Isla de Tercia. Despite repeated attempts to meet with members of the project, I was not able to arrange an opportunity to revisit the site. I later learned that

[25] https://audaciousveg.org/young-adult-traineeships/

the cooperative was in the midst of some internal, organisational challenges. I decided not to pursue Isla de Tercia as a site for research as I did not feel it would be possible to build relationships with the group during a difficult period and did not want to impose myself as a researcher making demands on their time.

By coincidence, during my time in Seville, I lived in an apartment close to Huerto del Rey Moro. I began to visit the garden, not with the conscious aim of developing my research project, but to spend time in one of the few public green spaces in the centre of the city. Over a period of two weeks I spent time in the gardens, joined the communal lunches, and helped to make plant pots from recycled cardboard for the upcoming *Barrio Abierto* festival. During conversations with gardeners at the site, we talked about my project, as well as some of the research questions that I was interested in exploring, as well as the process of participatory video-making. Several gardeners became immediately keen to learn how to shoot and edit a short film about the garden.

During this time, I continued to build relationships with gardeners at Miraflores Sur. However, it became clear very quickly that whilst they were happy to talk to me about the garden and the community, they had little interest in being involved in a participatory research process. I feel that in part this was an instinctive reaction to the technology of video-making and in part it was due to their experience of visiting researchers in the gardens. As a well-known urban garden in Spain, Miraflores Sur receives a number of visits from researchers from Spain and other European countries. These visiting researchers come from a wide range of disciplines, including the natural and social sciences, however the gardeners had never been involved before in a participatory research process; the majority of researchers come to the garden to ask questions, take samples of soil and water, or calculate the yields. As such the gardeners in Miraflores Sur did not understand the idea of being co-investigators in a research process and did not see the purpose of their participation.

This was in stark contrast to the gardeners at Huerto del Rey Moro, who first and foremost wanted to take part in a participatory process, regardless of the specific nature or themes of the research. The average age of gardeners in Huerto del Rey Moro is much younger than in Miraflores Sur, and so it is possible that the group felt more capable or willing to participate in a video-making process. However, it is also likely to be that the culture of the garden, as detailed in previous Chapters, encouraged and normalised processes of participation and knowledge-sharing. When the gardeners in Huerto del Rey Moro, most of whom had never visited Miraflores Sur, learned more about the other garden, they were keen to visit. We decided, as a group, that it would be interesting to make a video across the two sites. This process became an unanticipated source of reflection and insight as I discuss in the following section.

It is important therefore to recognise the strong element of opportunism and chance in finding the group of gardeners that wanted to develop a participatory video-making process. The

relationships that I built in Huerto del Rey Moro during this period lasted throughout the entire PhD process as many of the same group went on to form the group, La Boldina, the following year. This opportunity meant that I had a capable and motivated group of participants with which to begin the participatory video-making process, but at the same time, the research questions that I had developed regarding the relationships between food sovereignty and the right to the city seemed to be increasingly abstracted from the day-to-day reality and the challenges facing the gardeners.

At this point it is also important to include a note on language. I studied Spanish for six years at school but have not used it regularly since then. When I returned to Seville I immersed myself as much as I could in relearning the language, living with Spanish-speakers, reading textbooks, and attending language-exchange meetings, but I still struggled initially with language. As my Spanish improved my vocabulary grew, but at the same time became quite specific to the conversations in the gardens, participatory video-making, and the subjects of my research. This meant that it was difficult to interact more informally with the group.

However, I was aided in two ways. I was fortunate to have two people involved in the first participatory video process that spoke English and were able to help me communicate with the wider group. (One of these gardeners remained centrally involved with the project through the second process of video-making with La Boldina, ensuring some continuity). Moreover, using video as part of my methodology also allowed me to re-watch discussions and interviews to ensure that I could extract the full meaning. All interviews, workshops and video training were conducted in Spanish, with the exception of three interviews in Huerto del Rey Moro that were conducted in English during the first cycle of research, and one interview conducted in English during the second cycle of research. Transcripts of all interviews were made in Spanish by a professional transcription service, which worked from an audio file, edited to remove any identifying information. I conducted analysis using the Spanish transcripts, key parts of which I translated into English, such as those parts of interviews quoted in previous Chapters.

I was also fortunate that the group that I was working in Huerto del Rey Moro were used to communicating with visitors to the garden for whom Spanish was not their first language. For this reason, my initially limited Spanish was far less of a barrier to communication that it might have been. During the second participatory video process, my Spanish had improved to the extent that I was able to work fluently with only occasional support from English-speaking colleagues.

To an extent, the issue of language limited the ways in which I could discuss the more theoretical aspects of my research with the group, and in other ways it opened up new opportunities for reflection and insight. For example, term ‘food sovereignty’ was not used by the group when I arrived. Some gardeners had heard of Via Campesina, but they did not connect their work with the struggle for peasants’ rights. Rather the gardeners in Huerto del

Rey Moro spoke in terms of ‘cooperation’, ‘resilience’, ‘autonomy’ and the ‘rights of nature’. Each of these terms overlaps to an extent with the notion of food sovereignty, and yet they are each different, giving rise to new questions and new concerns that are not contained within the food sovereignty discourse.

Similarly, local interpretations of ideas of agroecology have little to do with the conception of agroecology that is broadly the object of research of the Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience. Unpacking the ways that words were used differently created space for discussion and reflection; why, for example, did the gardeners sometimes use the word *tierra*, sometimes *suelo*, and sometimes *territorio*, to identify what would translate to English, in context, as simply *land*?

The first stages of the first participatory video process were messy. Messy in the sense that there was no consensus regarding the conceptual direction of the project. And messy in a creative, productive sense in that there were suddenly more concepts and issues being brought into the project than I had narrowly conceived in terms of food sovereignty and the right to the city. In terms of thinking through the project cycles, the project was very much redesigned at this point.

We agreed as a group that video-making would be an exciting and engaging way of exploring the two urban gardens and co-developed an outline for a participatory video-making process. Through two half-day participatory workshops held in Huerto del Rey Moro, we identified three themes that were central to both gardens, as both a challenge and an opportunity: communication, *autogestion*, and transformation, described in previous Chapters.

I began to feel, at this point, that the subject of the video was becoming increasingly detached from the theoretical aims of the research project. However, I also felt that it was important to be carried by the gardeners’ energy and focus to explore these issues. The three themes became the focus of the first video output, *Jardin Interior*.

At this point when the film was publicly released I noticed a sharp drop off in the gardeners’ interest in the video. It was collectively decided that I would host the film on my own Vimeo channel, partly because Vimeo requires a paid subscription in order to embed the film in high definition on other websites. With hindsight, this meant that, on returning to the UK, I became the possessor and manager of the film. The gardeners disseminated the film widely, however there was far less creativity or critical engagement with its themes.

Over the summer in 2016, as the first participatory video was more widely disseminated, I felt a significantly decoupling of the film from my research. When I discussed the idea of decoupling with the gardeners in 2017, they added that for them, the film was predominantly a reflective process, a snapshot in time of a garden that is continuously, rapidly changing. The film continued to be shared and commented on online. I received feedback from a

number of individuals around the world offering feedback and support, which I passed on immediately to the gardeners that made the film.

However, the nature of the comments was not related to issues that were important to my research project, or the work of the gardeners. For example, I received emails from two urban agriculture practitioners in sub-Saharan African cities that enquired about the links between urban gardening and food security in Seville. Food security was not a theme that we were exploring through the research and was not contained within the video. However, it is interesting that aspects of the film had resonated with the contexts in which these people were working. In this way the film, since being made public, is no longer under our control, and has taken on a life of its own. Perhaps this is an inevitable consequence of using participatory video-making in research. But I regret that, due to the constraints of the PhD process, I was not able to bring together the gardeners that made the film with gardeners in other cities that responded to it online.

On returning to the UK in 2016, I began the process of trying to reconcile the participatory video-making process with the questions raised by the food sovereignty and right to the city discourses. At this point I made two significant changes to my research. The first is that I began to recognise that the idea of food sovereignty was not an appropriate way of framing the challenges facing the urban gardeners in Seville, nor their responses to these challenges. The idea of food sovereignty derives from the struggles of rural peasants and small-scale farmers in the global South. There exists significant overlap between the framing of these rural issues and urban struggles around the world, but there also exist significant differences.

Food sovereignty brings together issues of identity and cultural politics with dignified livelihoods, and the democratisation of food systems. As much as the gardeners that were involved in this project were sensitive to and interested in these issues, they did not relate these struggles to their activities at the neighbourhood-level. Moreover, across the two gardens, the gardeners were not concerned with issues of livelihoods nor was there any discussion, at least during the first cycle of research, about the connection between urban gardening and food systems.

The second significant change regarded the concept of the right to the city. Before embarking on fieldwork, I had been primarily interested in two aspects of the right to the city discourse: the conception of urban space as a concentration of surplus capital within the global capitalist system; and Lefebvre's collective, non-State-centric conception of rights. However, neither of these ideas is necessarily useful for understanding or addressing the immediate challenges facing these groups. However, I identified several aspects of the right to the city discourse that were useful for framing the issues, and which form the basis of Chapters 4 to 7 of this thesis; the social production of space, the process of *autogestion*, and learning the city. These became central pillars of my theoretical framework as I returned to Seville in October 2017.

This process evidences the tension regarding the use of participatory research within a relatively short PhD cycle. In order to be awarded the opportunity to study towards a PhD the applicant is required to submit a project proposal that gives some detail about anticipated contributions to theoretical discourse, which of course are subject to change, but are conceived and framed at a level that is not of interest or practical use for participants within the research. I managed this tension by ensuring that the research design and data collection were conducted in a participatory way, but I recognise that the majority of analysis was conducted by me alone. Of course, my analysis drew on insights from the collective group, and I have attempted, as far as possible to allow the words of the participants and interviewees to guide and shape the Chapters 4 to 7.

However, it is important to recognise that this was a research process with significant participatory elements, rather than an a wholly participatory research process. In part this reflects the interests of the group; no one involved in the video process has an interest in contributing to academic literature, and the labour involved in analysing fieldwork data was of little practical interest or use to the group.

I made it clear to the gardeners that I would be supportive of a process of co-analysis, however this never went beyond discussions of what I was finding and themes and patterns I was beginning to recognise across the gardens. The only exception to this was one co-authored article with Xavi Castroviejo, published in RUAF magazine in November 2017 on the work of La Boldina, entitled, “Learning from Nature: New Forms of Urban Permaculture in Seville.”

When compared to the second period of fieldwork in the city, my third visit to Seville in September 2016 was a relative failure. My hope and intention had been to return to the city, as discussed with a number of the gardeners with whom I was in regular contact, to build upon the research that we had conducted before. However, it quickly became clear that the gardeners had neither the time nor the inclination to pick up where we had left off. I later learned that my third visit coincided with a difficult period within the garden, detailed in Chapter 6, which ultimately led to the formation of La Boldina in 2017.

During the third period of fieldwork I conducted follow-up interviews with key gardeners that I had met through the first participatory video process, as well as building new relationships with other networks in the Macarena district. The insights from this phase of fieldwork are largely contained within Chapter 4 on Seville’s urban gardens in historical context. Throughout this period I maintained good relations with the group that had been involved with the first video-process, and met them regularly for communal lunches in Huerto del Rey Moro, but we did not undertake another video process. This helped me to recognise the importance of aligning not only the research questions but also the methodology with the needs, interests, capacities, and motivations of the community with which I am working. I was fortunate that when I first went to the city these things had aligned in a way that was not

consciously managed. This had significant implications for the way that I approached the fourth and final phase of fieldwork in 2017.

Throughout the second and third periods of research I started to notice a peculiar dynamic. Some of the terms that I had been using to frame questions or talk about my research was entering the vernacular of the group. Terms like 'food sovereignty' were used increasingly often by the gardeners. And the group had started to talk about what I would term the politics of representation – who has a right to decide how a project is represented – a topic that we had discussed at length during the first participatory video process.

It is difficult to unpack fully what this dynamic represents. It could be the case that, as with the term *permaculture*, concepts are continuously introduced, redefined and re-appropriated by the group, and I am simply more sensitive to the use of specific terms or ideas that are critical to my PhD project. It could also be that when we spoke the group naturally and empathetically engaged using the language that I had been using. However, it is also possible to be the case that my perceived status as a visiting academic gave me disproportionate power to influence discussions regarding urban gardens in Seville. In this sense my positionality as a male visiting academic potentially steered the participants, and thus the direction of the project, in ways that I cannot fully account for.

For example, when we undertook the first participatory video process I positioned myself as a participant as opposed to an expert or trainer. The aim was to be able to participate in the learning process and discussions alongside the participants. However, my familiarity with the camera equipment, access to a high-end laptop for editing, and my facilitation role in workshops, manifested as an unintentional, epistemic authority within the group. Moreover, my limited Spanish during the first video process emphasised my sense of 'otherness', and whilst I was made to feel welcome by the group in the garden and socialised with them frequently, I was always a visitor to the community rather than a part of it.

Across the entire PhD process this dynamic softened, and during my final phase of fieldwork I felt that the issues of language and academic status were far less important than they had previously been. Nevertheless, it is important to recognise that even the deeply participatory elements of this research process could never fully escape the power dynamic that exists between academic and community-led organisations, which often privileges academic over non-academic insight.

When I returned to Seville in April 2017 for the fourth and final period of fieldwork, the situation had changed dramatically. The permaculture gardeners from Huerto del Rey Moro, the main participants in the first video-making process, had formed La Boldina. I made the decision to shift the focus of my fieldwork to continue working with this group rather than focus on individual community gardens as before. In part this was because of the eagerness of the group to re-engage with the project and build on the capacities that we had developed

in the past year for video-making. And in part it also represented an opportunity to examine the current and potential significance of urban agriculture at the city-level, beyond the spatial confines of the urban gardens.

Compared to the first participatory video-making process, the second process was far more structured. This meant that the process was more planned and 'efficient' in terms of visiting more sites and conducting more interviews in a shorter period of time. However, it was also decided by the group that I would travel to some of the locations alone to conduct interviews, based on themes and questions devised by the group. This reflected the changes in the group's organisation since the first process. In 2016, many of the gardeners were present almost every day in Huerto del Rey Moro, and it was easy to schedule film-making around other activities. However, members of La Boldina were working simultaneously on several projects and there were far fewer opportunities for spontaneous filming.

In practice this meant that whilst I conducted interviews based on questions from the group, the semi-structured nature of the interviews meant that I had more agency within the second video process than the first to shape the film, both in terms of asking questions and capturing footage from across the sites. To some extent my influence was mitigated through the participatory editing process that involved twelve members of La Boldina. Through the editing processes a substantially different focus of the film emerged from what I had been tasked with investigating initially.

The output film is not currently available publicly. Initially the decision was made to postpone the release of the film because some members of the group expressed concern that it might reignite issues with other members of the community in Huerto del Rey Moro, which appears in the film. As time has passed however, and relationships in and around Huerto del Rey Moro have improved, and in spite of their increasing use video and social media for external communications, there has not been any significant will amongst La Boldina to make the film public. I feel that this reflects the idea that the gardeners engaged in the video-making process as primarily a reflective and heuristic exercise, rather than one that is output focused. While I have consent from the whole group to use the film in my academic work and share it in academic forums. We agreed that the ultimate decision regarding its public release should remain with La Boldina.

In a research project of this nature, which included several significant participatory elements, the writing up process is an important site of power that, to a great extent, places me at odds with the research process until that point. Whilst we did not undertake a formal process of analysis as a group, I continuously shared reflections with the group from my field diary. These observations stimulated discussion and further insight, for example, on the nature of self-organisation in and around the gardens, which contributed substantially to the Chapters in this thesis. However, in writing up the thesis my responsibility as a doctoral researcher became not only to critically examine the case of Seville but also to relate the work of the

urban gardeners to broader theoretical issues. The tensions between the community-led, reflective process of participatory video-making and the individual, abstracted account of that process in a doctoral thesis, are inescapable. One of the aims of this Chapter is to recognise these tensions as well as the collective contributions to what might otherwise appear as individual insights.

Beyond the challenges that often come with a PAR approach to a PhD project – such as the challenge of building productive, equitable, and reciprocal relationships within strict time and financial constraints – this project encountered additional challenges through using an inherently 'messy' methodology, participatory video, in a rapidly changing community. These challenges are not specific to all participatory research, and certainly not all research that involves urban community gardens. Rather they represent very specific and local complications relating to community dynamics around Huerto del Rey Moro.

In practice, what this has meant is a greater challenge in terms of rationalising the process within a single, coherent academic thesis that contributes to academic discourses. In part, the selection of material for analysis, analytical processes, and the write-up have shaped the project significantly in ways that are entirely abstracted from the substantial processes of participatory project design and data collection. My academic interests and experience, for example in the works of Lefebvre, have inevitably shaped how the gardens and communities are represented here. While the majority of the research process has been participatory, collective, and dynamic, the outcomes of the research have been filtered through my individual interpretation, values, biases, and interests. Moreover, my interests have changed through time, over the course of the PhD cycle. It is important not to disregard this research for these reasons, but it is equally important to recognise explicitly the limitations of this project, and the nature of its conclusions.

A Critical Reflection on Participatory Video-Making in Research

It is not the purpose of this section to reiterate the methodology of this research, presented in Chapter 3. However, as a relatively new methodological approach, and with a growing critical discourse, it is important to reflect critically on the use of participatory video-making in research. In this section I consider the different elements of the participatory video-making process; planning, shooting, editing, distributing, as distinct epistemological opportunities that support different forms of knowledge production, reflection, and insight for both researcher and the participants. I also reflect on the significance of using participatory video within a broader framework of Participatory Action Research. I then consider some of the challenges that I encountered in using this methodology. And finally, I consider the extent to which participatory video-making is a useful way of approach research within urban community gardens.

A participatory video-making process contains distinct elements: technical training; planning through participatory workshops; shooting the film; participatory editing; screening and distribution. In both the first and second video processes, the first three elements overlapped significantly as the narrative of the film, and the capacity of the gardeners, evolved significantly throughout the process. Each phase created space for different forms of critical engagement that allowed different ideas to emerge from different places.

The aim of the technical training was not to teach the gardeners to use the camera and audio recording equipment to a high technical standard, but rather to de-mystify the equipment and support a culture of experimentation, mutual support, and mutual learning. Outside of the training workshops, I set specific tasks for the group, designed to deepen their critical engagement with film-making. For example, during the first participatory process I asked the gardeners to capture five shots of no more than 10-seconds each that "tell the story of the garden". In order to do this, the group had to negotiate how to plan a shoot sharing one camera between five people, as well as decide what was important, and what might illustrate the 'feel' of the garden.

The exercise raised a number of interesting questions about the relationship between the form and content of a video, as well as the politics of representation; who can decide how a project is represented? One gardener said, for example, "I feel I don't have a right" (male gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, April 2016, first participatory video process). Training, and discussion about the politics and ethics of film-making, continued throughout the video-making process.

In the first participatory video process we developed the themes of the film through workshops, outlined above. The workshops created a critical space that allowed for focused discussion of complex themes. Such spaces are not unique to a participatory video-making process, however the combination of workshops and filming exercises allowed for a productive dialogue between distinct critical processes.

The shooting process offered another, distinct set of opportunity for the gardeners to engage with the research process. One of the gardeners noted the way that video-making offered a different perspective on the garden, and allowed him a new opportunity to learn the space:

> *This has been an opportunity that you gave me, and I took it immediately because it was another way to learn about the garden. Of that I was really conscious in the beginning. It was a really conscious thing, to be on the camera and work with the camera, it was like putting yourself in another perspective. And at the same time working in the garden, and changing from one to another during the day, for me it is accelerating the process of knowing the place* (interview with male gardener, June 2016, Huerto del Rey Moro).

Another distinct opportunity that emerged through the shooting process was the idea of trans-local learning; forging connections between places to support learning across places, and the process of learning one place through another:

> *I have been visiting Miraflores with you. That was a huge opportunity to know… It taught me more about this place, visiting Miraflores. It taught me really a lot about this place. How it works, with the neighbourhood, with those involved, and how the people here are working. It's been amazing. Last week was it we visited, talked to the people, taught me a lot of things. Even if they were only brief conversations, they throw a lot of light to this area and this garden* (interview with male gardener, May 2016, Huerto del Rey Moro).

The shooting process enabled us as a group to explore the gardens in a new and different way. I found, for example, that when speaking with people within a space, I often received the same answers to the same questions. In Huerto del Rey Moro, people often spoke about the challenges of organising a horizontal project as well as the health benefits of the garden. What was interesting was that people did not only bring up many of the same themes, but that they used the same words to describe them. I believe this is a consequence of the creation of community-narratives, discussed in Chapter 4, which 'snowball', becoming increasingly real, and more likely to be repeated, with each repetition.

Through the process of video-making, the gardeners thought in different ways about both the challenges and the benefits of the gardens. What images, for example, should be used to represent the impacts of the garden on the neighbourhood? These questions encouraged the gardeners to think more critically about what these impacts really are.

The use of two video processes, set one year apart, and involving many of the same people provided another opportunity to reflect on the changes in both groups and individuals through time. The screening of the first film with La Boldina was a critical moment in the second participatory video process, creating a reflective and critical space to discuss the purpose and trajectory of the group. For some of the gardeners, this was an opportunity to recognise growth as well as change:

> *People used to have that innocent perspective of the Huerto. Now we see the Huerto as much more three-dimensional. In the [first] film, I see myself as very innocent. I see it as very distant. I'm much more involved with La Boldina than the Huerto now. It was a more romantic vision back then and now I have more of a pragmatic view* (interview with male gardener, Casa del Pumarejo, May 2017).

Across the two video processes, the participatory editing workshops were not only about the assemblage of material, but also an opportunity to reflect on how we have represented the gardens and the gardeners, how we want to represent them, and how different themes have

been explored implicitly. In both cases, the themes of the film changed substantially during the editing process from the plans developed in earlier workshops.

In the first film, the theme of *autogestion* became far less central. At the same time, the gardeners noticed the amount of material captured that related to the reuse and rehabilitation of waste materials, which became a section of the output film. The second editing process, central themes were abandoned in favour of a rapid overview of some of the group's projects.

In both editing processes we reviewed 7-8 hours of footage over three days. These sessions were long and occasionally fraught, with different members of the group entering the process with different ideas and expectations at different times. Occasionally a member of the group would want to start a discussion about that they felt was important, for example, whether an image should or should not be included because of what it implied about the group's philosophy. Sometimes these points were taken up for discussion, which could involve a room-full of people in intense debate about what would ultimately be a few seconds of footage in the final film. Other times these discussions were avoided, not because the issue was not important, but because there was only so much energy for debate across three days; people soon became exhausted.

In this sense the output film represents what could be agreed by a diverse group of people, rather than an output that reflected accurately the collective position regarding the gardens. This was further compounded by the differential engagement of the group with the editing process. The second output film's credits list twelve editors that were involved in every aspect of the editing process, however twenty people were involved in some capacity. This was a challenge for me as facilitator, managing the expectations of individuals that were unable to attend perhaps one of the three editing sessions. This complex process is reflected in the messiness of the final output films. We made a decision as a group, in both processes, that it was more important to produce what we felt was a consensus-based, honest film, rather than one that aimed for narrative clarity.

The dissemination of the films has already been discussed at length in this Chapter. However, it is important to identify one final opportunity for critical engagement with the group that is more important that the public dissemination of the film, that is, the first screenings with the film's makers. In the case of the first film, we watched it first on a laptop in Huerto del Rey Moro, before travelling as a group to Miraflores Sur, to watch it on a projector with some of the gardeners involved, as well as the Heads of the gardener's and park Associations. This screening was followed by a discussion between the gardeners, from different the sites and of different generations about the future of urban gardening in the city. I asked each set of gardeners how they would use a small plot of land in each other's site. The purpose of the discussion was not to develop a roadmap for collaboration, but with the aid of the film's visuals, use concrete examples of action to explore differing visions for urban agriculture in the city. This discussion was particularly rich and brought together a large number of the

themes discussed though the entire process. One gardener from Huerto del Rey Moro noted after the discussion that she could see the growth in the group at this point:

> *I am a very sensitive person, and this is another transformational work that I am going through in this place. And trying not to feel asphyxia with all the information that comes along. The process with the workshops for me was really intense because I was seeing all this information and all these intuitions that I have been feeling in Sevilla this month all condensed. You came with everything so clear and it was an intense process but also beautiful. I felt so much growth in the group in that discussion* (interview with female gardener, Huerto del Rey Moro, June 2016).

For the second film, La Boldina, I missed the opportunity for a substantial discussion with the group at the screening, as the film was not completed by the time I left the city. However, we were able to organise a screening of the draft film at Casa del Pumarejo for twenty members of La Boldina. I feel that at this point, it was clear that second film had raised more questions than it answered for the group. In the first video process, the gardeners had sought to explore specific issues across two sites, and I believe, developed a better understanding of both gardens through the process. In the second film, the process had highlighted disparities in thinking within the group, and different visions for La Boldina and for urban agriculture in the city, which the process had not been able to reconcile. At the screening, one of the gardeners noted that above all, the film captured not the philosophy but the energy of the group.

Overall the participatory video process was extremely rich and productive. It allowed me to develop close relationships with the groups of gardeners that would not have been possible through an interview-based methodology. These relationships allowed me to better understand not only the practices of urban agriculture but the micro-politics of the gardens and complex the relationships within the gardens and between the gardens and their neighbourhoods.

However, the processes also produced more ‘data’ than I felt I could manage. On the one hand there is the qualitative data filmed though interviews, on another hand there is the visual data; how are things represented, by who, and why? Finally, there is the process of filmmaking; how do the findings that emerged from the process map against the evolving capacities and collective learning of the group of film-makers? As described in Chapter 3, the structure of the discussion Chapters, 4 to 7, were structured to broadly reflect insights and issues that were raised through the process. Overwhelmingly however, the actual analysis draws on the qualitative data developed through video-making. I feel that the type of analysis that could draw exhaustively on the multiple forms of knowledge produced though a video process needs to be a piece of research in its own right. In particular, I feel that there is an important opportunity to draw on the visual data developed through the process: what is the relationship, for example, between the ideas explored and the aesthetic of the film; how are different identities represented, both on and off camera? It is also important that future

research considers the impacts of a video-making process on the community involved; do participatory video outputs challenge or reinforce existing narratives; does participatory video-making enable reconciliation or entrench divisions? These are all significant questions for further research.

Why Use Participatory Video Making in Urban Community Gardens?

It is a significant challenge, for researchers and community-based organisations, to represent a dynamic and disordered space using visual media. A cursory search for European urban gardens on the internet will bring up thousands of images of plants, landscapes, and people. However, few of these images give any real sense of the 'feel' of the gardens, or any sense of what it is like to experience the space. In Lefebvrian terms, photographs can capture the *perceived* and, to some extent, the *conceived* dimensions of urban gardens, but not the *lived*.

To some extent, video outputs can reveal in greater depth than photography the complicated social and material processes that combine to give urban gardens their distinctive character. However there remain important limitations. The selection of material, through shooting and editing, might give a good indication of what it is like to experience the garden, but it is inescapably a deeply subjective process. In using a participatory approach to video-making, this subjectivity is rendered more collective and democratic. Nevertheless, a representation of the garden on film is an implicitly subjective and prescriptive representation of how the space can or ought to be conceived. In this way, the very act of participatory video-making is the production of conceived space, both reflecting and contesting the spatial ontology of the garden.

But beyond the inherent limitations of participatory video making in research, is there something about this methodology that makes it a particularly insightful or useful methodology in the context of urban community gardens? If we are seeking to observe an urban garden such as Huerto del Rey Moro, characterised by its diverse community, then an approach to research with distinct epistemological opportunities can be a useful way of exploring the diverse identities, diverse knowledges, and politics within the garden; each distinct element of the methodology can offer different perspectives on the same garden. However, many urban gardens are not so diverse but are populated by a relatively homogeneous demographic. In these cases, is there any value in such as heterodox approach to research?

Scholars such as Nathan McClintock (2014) have described the "contradictory politics" that characterise urban community gardens. In a sense, regardless of the individual gardeners that work in the space, these contradictory politics are ever present, resulting as they do from the contradictions between the nature of urban agriculture and prevailing trends in urban development and urban governance. For this reason, an approach to research that combines

visual and qualitative methods creates more critical spaces and more perspectives for articulating and exploring these contradictions.

Participatory video-making is a messy process, which enables us to represent the complex characters of the gardens rather than 'smooth' them out or explain them away such as a purely qualitative project is more likely to do. That is to say, the inherently messy and contradictory character of urban community gardens can be preserved and embraced in a participatory video output perhaps more than a purely written account. Working with gardeners that see urban gardening as a political act, as well as those who see the gardens as peaceful, non-political spaces, the video-making process was able to explore these tensions in ways that emphasised solidarity over difference.

Reflections on Participatory Action Research for Marxist Scholarship

In the final section of this Chapter I feel it is important to reflect upon what I see as a critical tension regarding the relationship between Participatory Action Research and wider academic enquiry. This research project has adopted a predominantly Marxist-Lefebvrian conceptual framework for exploring the issues of self-organisation and urban space as they relate to urban community gardens. Much of this theoretical literature is associated with the urban political economy and urban political ecology discourses, each of which has had significant contributions from Marxist thinkers. Lefebvre himself was strongly influenced by the Marxist tradition, although he was ostracised by the 'mainstream' Marxist community in Paris through the 1960s and 1970s – in part for the way that he brought together Marxist ideas with those of Libertarian thinkers such as Nietzsche. However, Lefebvre maintained throughout his career a way of thinking and a way of writing, that was clearly and distinctly influenced by Marxist dialectical reasoning, which continues to dominate the field of historical materialism today.

One of my primary motivations for engaging with Lefebvrian scholarship in the context of urban agriculture was what I have argued are significant limitations in urban agriculture scholarship; that it is largely apolitical and too focused on the impacts of urban growing spaces at the project-level. My intention has been to draw on Lefebvre's spatial ontology and the right to the city in order to identify significant processes in and around urban community gardens that are under-researched and under-theorised in the urban agriculture discourse, but which have transformative potentials at the city-level. Additionally I hoped was that the conceptual relationship between urban community gardens and Lefebvrian scholarship might be reciprocal; that through participatory research, I might identify significant processes that cannot be adequately accounted for in Lefebvre's works. Thus, I might contribute to both the urban agriculture discourse, and well as the narrower, but dynamic discourse around Lefebvrian scholarship.

In practice this reciprocity was difficult to achieve. During the course of my PhD, I identified several aspects of Lefebvre's work that were both useful for understanding the socio-political processes in and around urban community gardens, described in previous Chapters, such as heterotopias, spaces of representation, and *autogestion.* However, I found it increasingly difficult to articulate the relationship between the work I was conducting in Seville and the academic discourse around Lefebvre's works. This issue is particularly relevant in the context of Lefebvre's actual texts which are written poetically and unsystematically, covering a wide range of themes simultaneously, with countless vagaries, and contradictions, but with an unwavering consistency of dialectical reasoning. I was struggling to find a way that the outcomes of my research could possibly contribute to scholarship in this form.

This led me to reflect on the broader challenges of using Participatory Action Research to challenge existing theory in the context of a doctoral research project. On the one hand, in aiming to contribute towards, or challenge, established theory, a researcher will have to narrow and constrain the participatory elements of a research process in order to ensure that they yield 'data' that is pertinent to a pre-identified theoretical framework; it is a rare community for whom the vagaries in Lefebvre's thinking is a primary and immediate challenge. This is not to say that an open-ended PAR process cannot generate new theoretical frameworks, which can challenge existing theories. Rather, that such conceptual challenges cannot be planned for or tailored in advance of the PAR process. This is at odds with the prevailing ways that research, particularly doctoral research, is conducted in the UK; a doctoral proposal without some initial theoretical foothold or planned contribution to academic discourse is unlikely to be approved or funded.

In part this challenge is also the result of the nature of PAR. As described in Chapter 3, PAR aims to respond to needs in real life (Wicks, Reason, & Bradbury, 2008: 19). In this sense, theoretical contributions can be a secondary consideration for action researchers, and there are only limited pockets of discourse where PAR has been utilised at such a scale that conclusions emerge in relation to global, structural conditions. One important example is the *Diálogo de saberes* approach championed by Via Campesina, which has been vital in the development of the food sovereignty critique of global industrial food systems (Martínez-Torres & Rosset, 2014).

On the other hand, and perhaps more significantly, a Participatory Action Research approach is largely absent from Lefebvrian, and more widely, Marxist scholarship. This is observable in the work of seminal thinkers including Lefebvre, Harvey, and Castells, but also in more in the work of more recent scholars such as Merrifield, Marcuse, and Purcell. This point is telling. Whilst Marxist scholarship and PAR appear to be politically and philosophically compatible, the reality is that they are frequently epistemologically and methodologically opposed. Both neo-Marxist research and PAR are concerned with praxis and emancipation. However, there appears to be a stark contrast between grounded, Participatory Action Research, and armchair dialectical reasoning.

This led me to question whether Participatory Action Research was capable of yielding evidence that could challenge Marxist and Lefebvrian political discourses, and the extent to which this research might contribute towards an answer. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to answer the first part of this question in full. Certainly, in the field of urban agriculture, there has not been an attempt to use participatory methods to challenge established Marxist theory. Elsewhere, however, there are numerous examples of ways in which Participatory Action Research has engaged with other established theoretical traditions, such as in the food sovereignty movement. Moreover, Marxist ideas, particularly the idea of *praxis*, not only resonate with a PAR approach to research, but can also be important in helping participatory action researchers position their work in relation to the capitalist political economy (Cunningham, 2017).

This suggests that it is not the conceptual framing of Lefebvrian-Marxist research, but rather the nature of the current scholarly discourse around the right to the city that broadly excludes certain modes of enquiry. The fundamental and urgent challenge for participatory action researchers is not to demonstrate the potential contribution of a PAR approach to Marxist research, but to challenge the nature of armchair Marxist scholarship.

There are a number of ways that these challenges might emerge. As described in Chapter 3 a PAR approach is concerned not only with the 'what', the 'how', and the 'why', but also the 'who': who's knowledge is represented in a discourse; where is knowledge situated, framed, embodied, and contested? PAR emboldens us to think critically about the process of research; how knowledge is constructed and by who. This approach may enable us to engage with urban Marxist traditions to a greater extent, not by directly challenging the products of dialectical reasoning but the process of abstracted, academic reflection as a form of knowledge production. In this way a PAR approach might help us to deconstruct and then reconstruct a more epistemologically pluralist, and territorially embedded urban Marxist discourse, in which diverse knowledge, including dialectical reasoning, ethnography, and participatory video-making might support one another as equally-valued modes of enquiry. Beyond recognising the important distinctions between the ways the right to the city has been conceptualised by scholars and actioned by social movements, described in Chapter 2, it was beyond the scope of this research to engage critically with the form of the right to the city discourse. However this represents an important area for further research.

The second significant way that I feel PAR might challenge abstract, materialist conceptualisations of reality is by demonstrating the areas that these abstract formulations fall short in accounting for observable and lived realities. This thesis has attempted to show that Lefebvre's conception of *autogestion* is insufficient for characterising and exploring some aspects of the dynamics of self-organisation in urban community gardens. Moreover, important themes such as narrative (Chapter 4), are not contained within the right to the city. The participatory video processes were particularly useful in revealing the social and organisational complexity of Seville's urban gardening projects, as well as for drawing out

dynamics and significant moments of change that cannot be accounted for using Lefebvre alone. These findings should be a challenge to armchair right to the city scholars. The power and potential of the idea of the right to the city cannot be abstracted from the city. Participatory Action Research is one response to the ways that some experiences and knowledges are privileged, and others marginalised, in the production of knowledge and theory. This is fundamentally aligned with the aims of the democratising aims of the right to the city. The challenge for PAR practitioners is to democratise the academic discourse.

Chapter 9: Concluding Remarks

In this thesis I have attempted to use the idea of the right to the city to tease out significant socio-political processes in and around urban community gardens that I have argued are under-recognised and under-researched in the urban agriculture discourse. My aim has been to demonstrate that by drawing on elements of Lefebvre's right to the city we can better understand the current and potential significance of urban community gardens as well as the challenges that constrain their transformative potentials. I have argued that Lefebvre's spatial ontology in particular enables a more nuanced understanding of the social, spatial, and political significance of urban agriculture and urban community gardens.

In Chapter 4 I proposed that the character of urban community gardens, and thus their socio-political potentials depend in part upon the collective creation of narratives. This research found that narratives of *restoration* and *resistance* were critical not only in justifying the existence and giving account of the gardens, but in contextualising project-level actions within broader urban trends and processes. I argued firstly that narratives contribute significantly to the social production of space in cities, and secondly that urban community gardens represent concentrated spaces in which these narratives emerge and are contested.

My aim in Chapter 4 was to demonstrate that, within Lefebvre's spatial ontology, community-constructed narratives are in a dialectical relationship with urban gardens as material spaces. Lefebvre's conception of space enables us not only to better understand the contribution of narrative to the production of urban gardens, but to characterise the significance of these narratives beyond the garden. In this way community narratives regarding urban space, food systems, and resource management, amongst other issues, can be understood simultaneously as collectively-negotiated interpretations of past and historical events, and collectively-negotiated visions for the future of gardens in cities.

In Chapter 5 I expanded on this idea that urban community gardens represent particular spatial concentrations of possibility with reference to Lefebvre's concept of heterotopias. I argued that the concept of heterotopias, within Lefebvre's conception of urban space, enables us to better understand the political implications of appropriated, self-managed urban spaces such as urban community gardens. I argued that some of these transformative potentials are specific to urban community gardens relative to other spaces, such as the way that reconnections with the city's ecological underpinnings through urban agriculture are made public and visible.

This research found that in the cases of Huerto del Rey Moro and Miraflores Sur, the most significant socio-political impacts of the gardens relate to the nature of community-managed space that they represent. In Chapter 5 I explored the extent to which the gardens can be

understood to have transformative potentials, arguing that Lefebvre's conception of space helps us to better articulate how the existing and potential socio-political impacts at the project-level relate to the neighbourhood- and the city-levels. I also argued that Lefebvre's dialectical conception of space helps us to overcome some of the contradictions associated with the idea of scale.

In Chapter 6 I explored the dynamics and politics of self-organisation in and around the urban community gardens, arguing that the forms of self-management observable in both spaces is socially and politically significant, but embodies some the radical potentials of *autogestion*. I argued that gardeners' motivations and the dynamics of communication within the gardens significantly affect the modes of organisation that emerge in the gardens, as well as how these modes manifest spatially within the site. In Chapter 6 I also introduced the urban permaculture collective, La Boldina, which operates at a greater scale than the gardens of Huerto del Rey Moro and Miraflores Sur. This research found that with this change in organisational structure and purpose, there came a range of new challenges as well as opportunities.

And in Chapter 7 I explored the new modes of learning that were emerging through engagement in urban community gardens and urban agriculture and reflected on the significance of learning the city for the realisation of the right to the city. This research found that while there are variety of ways that learning takes place both consciously and unconsciously through the practice of urban agriculture, perhaps the most significant form of learning relates to how urban gardeners in Seville are engaging with the city. By focusing on the ways that La Boldina are learning the city through urban permaculture – bridging its social and ecological dimensions – I argued that this emergent form of learning should be considered fundamental to the realisation of the right to the city. In this Chapter I also argue that through their new and diverse forms of engagement with the city, La Boldina are experimenting with new forms of urban citizenship based on action and participation.

In Chapter 8 I presented a critical discussion of the research processes, and the broader challenges of incorporating PAR and Marxist-Lefebvrian theory in the context of a doctoral research project. In this Chapter I also unpacked the various elements that constitute a participatory video process, arguing that the methodology enables diverse forms of epistemological engagement, which makes it particularly apt for exploring the complex and sometimes contradictory politics that characterise urban community gardens.

Before moving to this research project's conclusion, this is a useful point to outline the contribution of this thesis to research methodologies. As described in Chapter 3 of this thesis, participatory video-making is a recent innovation in PAR. Velez-Torrez (2013) described the potential role of participatory video for making "territorial histories"; territorialised films. This project has attempted to show that the process of co-creating territorialised, grounded films about a space and community can be incredibly rich in terms of research, and that there exist

multiple opportunities for critical reflection and insight within a participatory video-making process, which are not sufficiently disaggregated in academic discourse.

Scholarly literature on participatory video falls broadly into two areas. The first is literature celebrating participatory video-making for its empowering and transformative potentials (Kindon, 2003; Lunch & Lunch 2006; Sundar-Harris, 2008; White, 2003), and its potentials for engagement, particularly with youth groups (Luchs & Miller, 2015). The second is the more recent body of critical literature on participatory video-making that really began with Milne et al.'s (2012) *Handbook of Participatory Video*. Scholars have increasingly reflected on the potentials of the methodology to engage insufficiently with power-relations between researcher-researched (Milne, 2013), and its potential for producing individualising discourses (Rogers, 2016). Some scholars have also considered the ways that participatory video-making as a method might be better applied in geographical research contexts (Mistry & Beradi, 2012). Overall however, there is a distinct lack of engagement with the epistemological significance of participatory video-making, or the research potentials of each element of the video-making process.

The contribution of this thesis to the participatory video-discourse is to demonstrate the distinct epistemological potentials of the different elements of a participatory video-making process. The ways that different ideas emerge or are supressed through the planning, shooting, editing and screening stages of a participatory video are important questions for researchers that demand further attention. Participatory video-making invites and encourages the engagement of different knowledges in a way that should be considered both a challenge and an opportunity for researchers.

There are a number of ways that this richness might be captured. But one way would be to focus on the consonance or contradictions between the ways that ideas emerge and are represented through the different stages of a participatory video process. In this way, participatory video-making, with its distinct epistemological opportunities, could become a way of multiplying knowledge and insight. For example, interviewees might talk about the importance of gardens for urban sustainability. But in the shooting and editing processes, the same group of people might represent the gardens in a way that entirely eschews the theme of sustainability. These are not only two separate findings, but the relationship between them should also be considered a distinct finding. Put simply, the more plural the epistemological approach to answering the same set of questions, the richer the research and the potential for analytical insight. It was beyond the scope of this research project to operationalise this analytical approach. As described in Chapter 3, the approach taken to analysis in this project was less rigid, and more interpretive. However, this represents an important opportunity for further research which is not currently considered within the participatory video discourse.

The following section addresses the central research questions posed in the introduction to this thesis. What are the social and political potentials of urban agriculture, and to what extent

do these potentials manifest in a unique way within urban community gardens? And in what ways, and to what extent, does the idea of the right to the city help us to better understand these potentials?

The Socio-Political Significance of Urban Agriculture and Urban Community Gardens

As this thesis has argued in Huerto del Rey Moro, Miraflores Sur, and La Boldina, we can identify a wide range of social and political impacts associated with urban community gardening. These findings support the conclusions of other scholarly articles in the field of urban agriculture that emphasise the ways that urban gardens represent a struggle between community, developers, and local government with regard to the use of urban space (Guarneros-Meza & Geddes, 2010), and the significance of urban gardens as an act of resistance against the marketisation of the city (Baudry, 2012). The combination of impacts identified is unique to urban community gardens and evidences their distinct contributions to urban life. Some of these impacts are current, and some are potential.

In accordance with much of the academic literature on the health and well-being benefits of urban agriculture (Rodiek, 2003; Brown & Jameton 2000), the gardeners from Miraflores Sur and Huerto del Rey Moro identified a wide range of perceived health and well-being benefits from urban gardening. Some of these benefits related to the material dimensions of urban agriculture; growing healthy food and physical activity. Others related to working closely, or "being in contact", with nature. In this sense, this research supports the existing conceptions of the real and potential health impacts of urban agriculture.

However for the gardeners of Huerto del Rey Moro, the most significant impacts related to the nature of the space as a socio-political contrast to the rest of their lives. Various gardeners identified the importance of having a democratically-managed, public, green space in their neighbourhood. For this reason, this thesis has argued that the urban community gardens impact significantly at the neighbourhood-level through their role as one of the only green public spaces in an otherwise dense, built urban environment. In this sense, Huerto del Rey Moro can be understood as a struggle to claim an equal share of public resources, such as urban space; a process described in other urban community gardens (Walter, 2013).

However this research goes further than existing conceptions of the struggle by demonstrating that there can exist multiple, sometimes contradictory, struggles within the garden project. For example, for some of the gardeners the struggle for public green space is about space for children to play and be in contact with nature; for others it is about a broader social mission for a more sustainable society.

These separate struggles have both manifested through the urban garden, but the relationship between them means that it is an internally contested space, as well as being in

contrast to the wider neighbourhood. Lefebvre's spatial ontology, particularly his triad of space, enables us to characterise the ways that these social processes are in dialectical relationship with the material dimensions of the gardens; it is not only that the gardens are sites of struggles, it is that the gardens continuously (re)shape and are (re)shaped by these struggles.

Barron (2015) characterised the internal conflicts in urban community gardens in terms of the tensions between neoliberal and counter-neoliberal subjectivities. However, this thesis has demonstrated that there can exist multiple, simultaneous axes of conflict within the gardens. As the split between La Boldina and Huerto del Rey Moro demonstrated, these conflicts emerge from interpersonal tensions that are rooted in ideas of identity, community, and the natural environment. As the right to the city lens reveals, there is a dialectical relationship between an individual's emotional and subjective engagement with urban space and macro-economic processes; individual and collective lived-realities exist both outside of, and in continuous relationship with neoliberalism. However, as this thesis has shown, internal conflicts are multifarious, and cannot be reduced to broad economic categories.

The emergence of La Boldina also represents the significant potentials of urban gardens to act as crucibles for experimentation in self-organisation and self-management that can be translated to other areas of urban life. La Boldina are still committed to the horizontal approach to self-management fostered in Huerto del Rey Moro, but work and campaign on a wide range of issues beyond urban gardening, including anti-gentrification and water remunicipalisation campaigns. These potentials are not unique to urban community gardens, but in Seville, the gardens have become some of the primary material spaces in which these processes occur, for the gardeners as well as for a diverse range of community-based organisations and local associations.

The social impacts of the gardens are significant. But, however profound and however transformative the impacts of urban community gardens at the level of the gardeners, their networks, and neighbourhoods, urban community gardening has done little to challenge the prevailing structural conditions in Seville; gardeners are not self-sufficient in terms of the food they produce, nor has their involvement in the gardens enabled them to escape other, fundamentally capitalist, urban systems. Scholars such as Wilson (2012) have argued that urban community gardens can contribute towards building a world beyond capitalism, however it is important not to overstate this potential.

As Chapter 7 described, the new ways of learning and engaging with the city that are emerging from the gardens can be significant, however they are primarily creative acts of experimentation with practices that may prefigure socio-economic transformations at the city-level, rather than direct or linear acts towards a world beyond capitalism. The emerging *connaissance* observable in La Boldina is a necessary precondition of the right to the city, but only becomes transformative in the context of *autogestion*, self-management at the

neighbourhood- and city-levels. La Boldina is a new organisation that has prioritised activities that enable them to better articulate their vision for urban permaculture, but this falls some way short of the broader socio-political processes necessary for societal political and economic transformation. In this sense, the right to the city guides us towards the limitations of the current work of La Boldina. This thesis argues that the radical potentials of urban gardens should be approached in a more nuanced way than Wilson (2012) has attempted. Moreover, it argues that the right to the city provides a more critical and nuanced understanding of the radical and self-organising processes in the garden, whilst pushing us to be cognizant of the broader (urban) structural conditions in which they are embedded.

However, in order to understand the significance of urban community gardens it is also important to look beyond their current impacts: to characterise their potential impacts; to think about what conditions are required for these potentials to be realised; and to recognise which of these potential impacts are specific to urban gardens. This thesis argues that in Seville, at the city-level, urban community gardens and the practice of urban agriculture are more significant for their potential impacts than their current impacts.

In Chapter 5 I argued that urban gardens, particularly Huerto del Rey Moro, represented distinct spatial concentrations of socio-political potentials within the city. These potentials can be grouped into two categories: potentials relating to the modes of self-organisation in the gardens; and potentials relating to the practice of urban agriculture. The former are highly significant, both socially and politically, however they also may characterise other community-managed spaces. The latter represent possibilities that are particular to urban community gardens. To some extent, this reflects some academic literature that emphasises the role of urban gardens in the formation of a counter-public (Mitchell & Gibson, 2002; Shepard, 2009). However, the right to the city lens allows us to better contextualise this process within the production of, and struggle for, mobile and dynamic urban space.

Shepard (2009) urges us to recognise the ways that radical democratic processes can emerge in urban community gardens. This research finds that there are radical, deliberative and participatory processes occurring in and around some urban community gardens in Seville, but that these processes need to be understood in historical cultural context. Historical awareness of Andalucía's anarchist past, and recent memories of repression under Franco, have contributed significantly to both the ethos and practices of self-organised communities in the city.

For this reason the radical nature of these practices is not necessarily or solely a reaction to global capitalist dynamics, but also a form of cultural expression embedded in collective historical interpretation and narrative creation. There is a tendency in critical, Marxist urban studies to over-privilege global capital flows in the analysis of grounded urban struggles; David Harvey's (2006, 2012) work is a prime example of this tendency, and to a lesser extent Barron (2015), discussed above. This research finds that what constitutes a radical process in

and around the gardens needs to be historically and geographically contextualised in order to understand its potential, as well as its limitations.

In Huerto del Rey Moro, as detailed in Chapters 5 and 6, the horizontal, deliberative management of the space has become naturalised within the community. In Miraflores Sur there exists a management hierarchy. However, as detailed in Chapter 6, Miraflores Sur is also tacitly managed through the gardeners' interpersonal relationships. The management and decision-making structures in Huerto del Rey Moro and Miraflores Sur have been produced by the gardeners to meet their needs and expectations of the community.

However, the split in Huerto del Rey Moro evidences the fact that these decision-making processes are not perfect, and it is a significant challenge to manage a small, highly diverse, and highly inclusive space. In Miraflores Sur the system of self-management has become less deliberative and more representative through time. However, the management structure allows for significant potential changes in future; the next generation of gardeners can choose or develop their own structures. These forms of self-management have specific potentials for diverse ways of learning as well as sharing and contesting knowledge.

As detailed in Chapter 7, in both gardens, there exists a culture of mutual exchange and collective learning. In Miraflores Sur the forms of knowledge that are exchanged are, today, largely practical. Whilst this knowledge, about food, seeds, and health, for example, can be important in gardeners' lives outside of the project, this knowledge has little impact on the organisation of global food systems or the management of cities. Whereas in Huerto del Rey Moro and La Boldina, the forms of collective learning that characterise both spaces can be interpreted to a far greater extent in terms of what Freire termed, *conscientisation*, or what Lefebvre termed, *connaissance*.

For some of the gardeners these forms of learning have led to political awakenings and mobilisation around social and environmental issues. This is a real and potential impact of the gardens. 'Real' in the sense that the members of La Boldina are demonstrating the impacts of the diverse epistemologies and collective nature of learning that were only potential in Huerto del Rey Moro. 'Potential' in the sense that the collective, critical, co-learning processes in the gardens have the potential to impact on a wide range of other areas of urban life that in ways that have not yet emerged.

As detailed in Chapter 4, urban gardens such as Miraflores Sur and Huerto del Rey Moro also represent concentrated spaces where community narratives emerge and are contested. In a sense the public nature of the space, the close collaboration of the gardeners, and the contrast between the gardens and the wider city, invite the production of narratives that on one hand justify and, on the other hand, reify the gardens. The emergence of community narratives is not specific to urban gardens; the relationship between narrative-building and community-building can be observed in a variety of urban projects. However, in Seville the

urban garden narratives can serve to consolidate and focus political will for self-organisation and self-management. In a sense the gardens are prominent reminders of what is possible, and what can be achieved through community self-organisation.

Purcell and Tyman (2015) draw particular attention to the potentials of urban gardens as "spaces of encounter"; spaces that not only enable urban inhabitants to come together and interact, but positively and actively supports and encourages deliberation and exchange. The aim has been to demonstrate that through these encounters, urban gardens can develop socio-political significance that resists processes of alienation and commodification that result, inexorably, from capitalist modes of urbanisation. These possibilities, relating to the nature of self-organisation, collective learning and narrative-building are critical to understanding the diverse dis-alienating potentials of community-managed urban spaces. However it is also important to identify the potential socio-political impacts that are specific to urban community gardens and the practice of urban agriculture.

The ways that gardeners engage in urban gardens have the potential to reconnect the social and ecological dimensions of urbanisation. For example, in connecting with the materiality of the city, through occupation, (re)claiming space, and creating a productive project, the gardeners of La Boldina have politicised the issue of water management in the city, informed by their observations and experiments in water management at the level of the garden. This has led to a growing mobilisation demanding better water management at the level of the Province. This is to say that through urban gardening, groups of urban inhabitants are developing a more nuanced and politicised conceptualisation of the city as a socio-ecological construct.

In this way urban gardens represent concentrated spaces where the struggle to reconnect the ecological with the social become public and immanent. This struggle has the potential to contribute to the dis-alienation of urban inhabitants from the natural environment. In a sense this directly counters the alienation of urban inhabitants from the urban biosphere, what has been described as the "extinction of experience" (Miller 2005). Drawing on the field of political ecology, Classens (2015) argued for a more nuanced understanding of the complex set of relationships between nature and society, and particularly the discursive role of nature, in the urban agriculture discourse. This thesis has engaged critically with the role of nature in the development of community in and around the gardens (Chapters 5 and 6), as well as the ways that nature is inspiring a nascent social movement (Chapter 7). However, this research has also gone beyond Classens in so far as I have attempted to demonstrate the significance of nature for community self-organisation, and political action, at the city-level.

This research finds that the combination of a right to the city and an urban political economy-approach, together, enable us to connect the personal and subjective awakenings observable in members of La Boldina, with broader urban and global struggles for access to and control of natural resources. That this struggle is undertaken through collective work and shared

space means that the gardens also have the potential to contribute to the dis-alienation of urban inhabitants from one another. This is an important contribution to the urban political ecology discourse around urban community gardens, which is too often concerned with conceptualisation, rather than action. By tracing the pathways from the development of individual ecological consciousness within the gardens to the development of a city-level permaculture collective, I hope that this research will encourage further exploration of the real-world political potentials of an urban political ecology lens.

Urban gardens also represent opportunities for urban inhabitants to experiment with the production of space. In gardens, perhaps more than any other urban space, gardeners can produce public or private space with small and everyday actions, such as planting and creating pathways. These socio-material experiments in the production of the city can variously educate and empower urban gardeners to self-manage and self-produce in other areas of their lives. Inspired by their experiences in the gardens, some members of La Boldina, for example, are experimenting with 3D printing; building their own forms of manufacturing to design and build components for their various gardening and non-gardening projects.

It is too early to make significant claims about the impact of the new spaces cultivated by La Boldina. However, we can already trace some pathways to impact by observing the impacts and trajectories of Huerto del Rey Moro and Miraflores Sur. To some extent, this is a question of scale, in producing more urban growing spaces with a greater capacity for the participation of urban inhabitants, self-organised community-led projects can become an increasingly consequential driver of the production of cities.

But is also important to recognise the significance of the emergent quality of La Boldina; their philosophy, approach and energy have emerged both *in response to* but also from *within* Seville's particular urban context. Chapter 6 I described in detail the socio-political motivations of La Boldina, and the ways this influenced their modes of self-organisation. Their aims are not measured in terms of outcomes such as the number of spaces cultivated. Rather they measure and value their impact in terms of the forms of interaction, and the depths of the connections, that their activities produce. In this sense, the struggle to grow food in cities can be interpreted as a struggle for agency within the city; creating spaces and processes that allow urban inhabitants to participate in the city as actors and agents, as opposed to experiencing the city as customers or consumers.

These potentials are significant. And have the potential to transform multiple dimensions of the urban experience. However, there exist a wide range of challenges and barriers to their realisation. Moreover the realisation of this potential can and will depend on a number of conditions.

In Seville, the gardens depend on the availability and accessibility of a relatively limited amount of urban space. The development of these urban gardens does not necessarily require legal ownership of urban land by the community, but it does require usufruct for a sustained period of time. In spite of the threat of eviction, the gardeners of Huerto del Rey Moro feel sufficiently secure in the space to invest their time and labour to improve and develop the site as a community garden.

The realisation of the gardens' political potentials also depends upon the sustained will and energy of a mobilised community, lest the initial desire to reclaim and transform urban public space dissipates, as can be seen in Miraflores Sur. The case of La Boldina suggests that an important condition of their continued work has been for the space to expand. This does not necessarily need to be material space, but rather new areas of work where they may direct their creative energies for self-management.

The realisation of the socio-political potentials of urban community gardens at multiple levels also requires an approach to self-organisation that is inclusive, adaptive and dynamic. On one hand this mitigates the potential of community fatigue to set it, or the projects to become over reliant on a small number of individuals. But more significantly, this approach enables the gardens to gain significance beyond their capacity for growing food, they can become sites of mobilisation and empowerment; a means through which diverse urban struggles can become material reality.

There are also a number of minor organisational changes that would support the creation of more diverse and inclusive spaces. As detailed in Chapter 4, the gardens at Miraflores are currently dominated by retired male gardeners. This situation is sustained by the way that plots are reallocated each year by drawing names from a hat; the higher number of applications from retired male gardens means that they continue to form a majority. In order to make the gardens more demographically diverse, it would be important to develop a more proactive approach to ensuring that young people, women, and people from minority backgrounds are prioritised in the allocation process.

In conclusion, Miraflores Sur, Huerto del Rey Moro, and La Boldina provide substantial evidence of the important socio-political potentials embedded in self-managed urban community gardens and the practice of urban agriculture. These are spaces that, consciously or unconsciously, support the emergence of ideas and processes that contrast to the prevailing urban logics of commodification, exchange-value, alienation, and individualism. In this way, some urban gardens can be understood as nascent spatial manifestations of an alternative form of urban development, one which is produced and controlled by self-organising, self-managing groups of urban inhabitants. What distinguishes these urban gardens from other community-managed urban spaces is the gardeners' reconnection with the ecological systems that necessarily underlie, but are often exploited by, capitalist modes of development. For this reason urban agriculture should be considered a political act. And

urban community gardens should be understood as political spaces, which contribute to the development of the collective visions and practices that are necessary to reclaim the city for all urban inhabitants.

Urban Agriculture and the Right to the City

At this point it is useful to reflect on two questions. The first is: to what extent are the urban gardeners in Seville realising their right to the city? The second and more important question is: to what extent does the concept of the right to the city enable us as researchers to better understand socio-political processes in urban community gardens in ways that are currently under-recognised within the urban agriculture discourse?

Before addressing the first question it is important to note that, in isolation, no single activity or set of practices can signify the realisation of the right to the city. This is for two reasons. The first is that Lefebvre's right to the city is not an end in itself; no community can be said to have realised their right to the city. Rather it signifies an ongoing struggle for the radical democratisation of the city, which must be continuously reimagined and remade. The second is that the right to the city, as struggle and process, cannot exist in isolation; it encompasses all elements of the urban reality, and cannot be confined to a single type of space, such as urban community gardens, or single set of practices, such as urban agriculture. However we can consider the extent to which the urban community gardens in Seville are producing to the conditions under which the struggle for the right to the city might emerge and be consolidated.

In the case of Huerto del Rey Moro and La Boldina, the innovative forms of horizontalism, self-management and community-led processes are important examples of the forms of self-organisation and self-management, the *autogestion*, that Lefebvre argued were necessary for the right to the city. However, they are far more limited in scope and impact. For many of the urban gardeners, self-management is a process that is silo-ed within the part of their lives around urban gardening. This is to say that the horizontal, democratic, and adaptive forms of governance and decision-making in the gardens do not necessarily lead to corresponding transformations in the gardeners' professional and personal lives away from the gardens. For this reason, it is important not to overstate the importance of these self-management processes.

At the same time, if the struggle for the right to the city is to succeed in mobilising more and more urban inhabitants to participate in the management of the city, then the model of self-organisation and governance that is observable in Huerto del Rey Moro is a useful and effective example to follow. This is not to say that the precise governance mechanisms of the garden can be scaled-up to the city-level, but rather that the approach of the gardeners and local residents – emphasising inclusion, deliberation and participation in decision-making – are eminently scalable principles in the struggle for the right to the city.

Perhaps more significant are the forms of knowledge production and relationship with urban space that the urban community gardens facilitate. The forms of democratic, epistemologically-diverse knowledge production observable in the garden, detailed above, are fundamental to the right to the city. Gardeners are not only empowering one another to produce and self-manage knowledge about urban planning, land management, urban ecology, and institutional contexts, they are creating processes whereby this knowledge can be made actionable, through concrete, material projects and political mobilisations.

Overall however, it is too simple to say that urban community gardens can or should be understood as a realisation of the right to the city. Some groups of urban gardeners have made significant achievements that no doubt contribute to the conditions under which the right to the city can emerge, but there are many groups that have not. In selecting case studies and exploring themes that are consonant with the right to the city framework, it is very possible that this research process has not sufficiently accounted for prevailing motivations, impacts and challenges that contradict elements of the right to the city framework. It was beyond the scope of this research project, for example, to explore tensions between naturalised ideas of Neoliberal governmentality and the horizontalism that characterises some urban gardens (Pudup, 2008).

However, what this research has attempted to demonstrate is that urban community gardens have a unique set of socio-political potentials, described above, that make them uniquely significant for the emergence of the struggle for the right to the city. This is not to say that they are the only spaces that such a struggle can emerge, and indeed, the right to the city necessitates participation beyond any single community or sector. Rather it is to say that the nature of urban community gardens means they are important *spaces of potential* for the emergence of a struggle for the right to the city.

But what does right to the city offer as a way of characterising and understanding the potentials of urban gardens, and what is the contribution of the right to the city to the urban agriculture discourse? This research has found several distinct contributions that the right to the city discourse offers for the study of urban agriculture and urban community gardens. These contributions can be grouped into two categories: the first relates to the conception of urban space; the second, to the ideas of citizenship, agency, and rights.

In much of the urban agriculture discourse, the practice of urban agriculture and spaces such as urban community gardens explore the impacts of agriculture and gardening *in cities.* But this approach cannot sufficiently unpack the significance of the fundamentally *urban* character of urban agriculture, which is to say, how urban gardening relates to the more fundamental processes in the construction of the city, and urban space.

In using the idea of the right to the city to examine urban community gardens it is possible to identify their impacts in the context of the social production of the city. Lefebvre's spatial triad,

as well as his numerous further characterisations for conceptualising urban space, such as heterotopias, allow us as researchers to conceptualise urban gardens as spaces embedded within, and in dialectical relationship with, broader social, economic and political processes. This implies that the materiality and spatiality of urban community gardens – whether they are reclaimed or occupied, whether they exist on private, public or institutional land etc – is not only a characteristic of a project in the city, but rather an indicator and determinant of their potentials to impact on urban processes.

The right to the city as a concept does not change the character or potential significance of urban community gardens. At the same time the right to the city does not require urban inhabitants to march under its banner for the struggle to exist. Rather the right to the city, as a critical framework, allows us to identify under-recognised but potentially significant impacts and offers a political framework within which existing socio-political potentials might be better realised. Interpreting urban gardens in the context of this more dynamic and nuanced conception of urban contexts has several implications for areas of further research, discussed below.

The process of collective narrative creation is consistent with the social construction of space, specifically the creation of *spaces of representation*. Within a framework of the right to the city, the collective construction and communication of narratives is not only critical in producing the distinctive character of urban community gardens, but in situating their significance within perceptions of wider urban trends and processes. In this sense, community-narratives in and around urban community gardens can be understood as important drivers of the production of urban space. Lefebvre helps us to understand the socio-political significance of these processes at the level of the city, beyond the gardens. The challenge for researchers and the urban agriculture discourse is to recognise and respond to the ways that urban gardeners are not only producing vegetables but are producing the city itself.

Similarly, the idea of heterotopic spaces enables us to better characterise and respond to what this thesis has argued is perhaps the most important and unique significance of urban community gardens in European cities, as concentrated spaces of socio-political possibility, in contrast to isotopic spaces,

> "spaces homologous to the logic of capital, having analogous functions and structures from the perspective of capital reproduction that are therefore spaces of capital, commodified – that is, having exchange value" (Junior, 2014: 155).

As this research has shown, certainly not all urban gardens are radical places; the self-organisation and commitment to participatory, democratic processes in Huerto del Rey Moro is a rare example in Seville. Even in today's less radical gardens, such as Miraflores Sur, the idea of heterotopic space enables us to better characterise the socio-economic significance of

urban food production, and self-production, in contrast to prevailing urban capitalist trends. The significant point is that through Lefebvre's spatial ontology, regardless of the politics of the individual gardeners, the very *existence* of urban community gardens can be understood as a political act.

In advocating for an approach to urban agriculture that emphasises the relationships between urban gardens and broader urban processes it is worth returning to the urban agriculture discourse. The idea of the right to the city emboldens us to critically unpack the nature of the 'urban' in urban agriculture, by situating urban community gardens in the context of broader dynamics of urbanisation and urban processes. To this end it is useful to distinguish between *agriculture in cities* and *urban agriculture*. Each label may be used to apply to the same projects and practices without contradiction, but each better enables us to characterise the impact and significance of different aspects of urban community gardens, as practice, as space, as community, and as process.

This is not to say that agriculture in cities is not inherently related to urban processes, but that the academic discourse surrounding urban food production can be productively divided into these two categories: one that critically situates urban agriculture within urban processes; and one that focuses on the practice within cities. When framed in this way there appears an immediate imbalance in the discourse. There exists an extensive field of literature from both the global North and South that explores the ways that food is cultivated in cities, and the impacts of the activity on the gardeners. There exists far less research that engages critically with the nature of the urban.

Urban agriculture can be a way of characterising urban gardens in the context of urban social, economic, spatial, political and ecological processes. In this way urban gardens, parks, allotments and fields can be understood not as arenas for urban agriculture, but as heterogeneous, and heterotopic spaces that fundamentally and continuously reproduce and/or challenge urban dynamics and the nature of cities. My intention is that this thesis is a contribution to what I identify as the urban agriculture discourse, and not the discourse regarding agriculture in cities.

This thesis showed how the right to the city as an approach to urban agriculture research allows us to recognise and engage critically with the production of cities as a fundamentally people-led, rather than State-led, process. In much of the urban agriculture discourse, urban inhabitants are framed as the primary agents of change at the project-level, while the State, as well as private and other institutional actors are framed as the primary agents of change at the city-level, evidenced by the extensive literature on urban agriculture policy and institutional dimensions. The result is that within the urban agriculture discourse, urban gardens are frequently portrayed as being deserving, or the practice of urban agriculture being worthy of greater State support. This argument is important, but it implicitly reproduces

the idea that local government is inherently more significant than community-based organisations in the production and management of the city.

Lefebvre distinguishes between *dominated spaces;* spaces transformed by the vision of individuals, technology and practice; and *appropriated* spaces; spaces transformed through labour by a community, for a community. Appropriated spaces are the basis for Lefebvre's idea as the city as *oeuvre* – a body of works rather than a product. For example, a concrete slab used to create a road dominates the countryside through the visions of the designer and the urban planner. By contrast urban community gardens represent a dynamic negotiation between urban inhabitants and the natural environment. If we accept that urban space is fundamentally mobile, dynamic, and continuously (re)produced, then we must also recognise that social and material activities such as urban gardening have the potentials to produce and change the city that are comparable to architects, urban planners, and urban policy-makers.

The idea of the right to the city offers a conception of citizenship, derived from the idea of collective rights. This conceptualisation can help us to characterise the socio-political potentials of urban agriculture in ways that are currently under-explored in academic discourse. Lefebvre's right to the city was based on collective rights; distinct from the State-centric conception of individual human rights that underpin prevailing conceptions of representative democracy and franchise. Collective rights are distinct from individual human rights in so far as they do not require the State to be the guarantor. This framing of rights has significant implications for the role and the significance of public policy. The question becomes not which policies can support which outcomes, but how public policy can be reimagined to respond to the more substantive conception of urban citizenship characterised by self-organisation, action, and participation in the production and management of the city.

Contemporary debates around the notion of citizenship typically focus on the differences between formal, and so-called 'substantive citizenship', a concept that has developed in predominantly feminist literature, and which has wide appeal. Scholars such as John Gaventa (2002) have stressed the distinction between formal, legal citizenship, characterised by status, and substantive citizenship, characterised by the full exercise of social, economic, political, and cultural rights.

Lefebvre's is undoubtedly a substantive form citizenship, one that comprises a range of entitlements; these entitlements must be cultivated as much as they are enabled, claimed as much as granted. This relates closely to what Hannah Arendt termed, "the right to have rights"; interpreted from a Lefebvrian perspective as the right to *claim* rights. Substantive citizenship shifts the citizenship discourse away from issues of territory, nationality, and legality, towards a conception of citizenship as action, performance and participation. In the urban context, substantive citizenship is therefore,

> "A more active notion of citizenship: one which recognises the agency of citizens as 'makers and shapers' rather than as 'users and choosers' of interventions or services designed by others" (Gaventa, 2002: 5).

In bringing together Lefebvre's implicit notion of a more active and substantive form of citizenship, one based on the actions and interactions of all urban inhabitants, we reframe urban gardeners as political actors. The challenge for the urban agriculture discourse is how to reconstitute our understanding of the relationship between urban inhabitants and the State. As Castells writes:

> "Societies evolve and change by deconstructing their institutions under the pressure of new power relationships and constructing new sets of institutions that allow people to live side by side without self-destroying, in spite of their contradictory interests and values" (Castells, 2007: 258).

Of course, this question raises several important questions on the issue of urban policy, discussed below. And it is beyond the scope of this project to analyse the extent to which urban gardens are realising their potentials for creating new social institutions that subvert the power of the State. Nevertheless, Lefebvre and Castells do helps us to better characterise the political enormity of day-to-day actions and decision-making processes in and around the gardens. To some extent we can interpret the autonomy and self-organisation of La Boldina in terms of the first steps towards a revolutionary praxis in the Lefebvrian sense, going "beyond democracy and beyond the democratic state, to build a society without state power" (1968:138). The group are forging networks of production and exchange that operate beyond State. Moreover, they are currently *invisible* to the State. The group also represent an emerging, collective and substantive form of citizenship, that is defined by a form of active citizenship – making claim to the city – that is under-recognised in the urban agriculture discourse. However it is also important to recognise two significant limitations of the idea of the right to the city as articulated by Lefebvre. The first relates to the idea of *autogestion*, the second to the urban socio-ecological metabolism.

To some extent, the idea of *autogestion* is useful for articulating the political significance of self-management processes within the city. However, as Chapter 6 describes, Lefebvre's conception of *autogestion* is of limited use in helping us to better understand the dynamics of self-organisation and self-management in the gardens. This is primarily because Lefebvre's writings, he does not unpack in any critical depth the complex and heterogeneous nature of urban communities (nor the countless communities that constitute the urban population). Lefebvre's conception of space is critical, social and nuanced. However, within his spatial ontology, urban inhabitants and communities are largely instrumentalised.

The idea of the right to the city as articulated by Lefebvre does not sufficiently account for the heterogenous and contested nature of communities, nor the intersectional identities of urban

inhabitants. Subsequent scholars and social movements associated with the right to the city have contributed to this area of the discourse. However, this thesis argues that it is necessary to look beyond the right to the city in order to critically engage with the politics and dynamics of self-organisation and self-management. To this end it is important to appeal to other areas of academic discourse, such as Habermas' Theory of Communicative Action, to fully account for the ways that subjective and contested socio-spatial processes of self-organisation produce the specific combination of potentials identified in and around Seville's urban community gardens.

The second limitation relates to what I have identified as one of the most significant real and potential impacts of urban gardens in Seville; the opportunity for urban inhabitants to reconnect with the fundamental socio-ecological metabolic flows that produce and sustain urban space. These metabolic processes are well explored by urban political ecologists, many of whom are indebted to Lefebvre and Lefebvrian scholarship. However it is important to note that Lefebvre's right to the city was limited to social, political and economic processes and did not articulate the relationship between the right to the city and the natural environment. Scholars such as Eric Swyngedouw have made significant strides to address this omission. In urban political ecology we have a lens that allows us to better understand the potentials of urban gardens to contribute to the agency of urban inhabitants to affect and derive benefit from flows of light, water, and nutrients, amongst countless other metabolic flows, through the city. This is to say that, in order to fully characterise the significance of urban gardens, we need to look beyond Lefebvre's right to the city.

In spite of these limitations, and in conclusion, the right to the city is a lens that reveals the hidden and potentially transformative geographies of urban agriculture. The assemblage of ideas proposed by Lefebvre, Harvey, Swyngedouw and others challenge researchers to contextualise the practice of urban agriculture and urban community gardens within a more critical conception of a multi-layered urban reality. In this way the small actions of urban gardeners, consciously or unconsciously, become political acts in the struggle for a greener and self-managing city.

It is not possible to say that the urban gardeners are achieving the right to the city through urban agriculture. But through everyday acts of self-organisation and self-management, communities of urban gardeners from Huerto del Rey Moro, Miraflores Sur, and La Boldina are carving out new forms of public space within the capitalist city; spaces that are significant not only in terms of the types of organisational structures they enable, but as concentrations of possibility where the social, political, and ecological dimensions of the city are brought together. The right to the city offers a path to a collective, emancipated urban future, self-managed by all urban inhabitants. As a lens and critical framework, it allows us to better contextualise urban agriculture within the broader urban project and find the hidden political potentials of urban community gardens. Urban gardening *is* a political act. The challenge for researchers and policy-makers is how to respond to this political potential.

The final question to address is the ways that this thesis has identified areas of the right to the city discourse that might be strengthened. In Chapter 8, I discussed the challenges of reconciling the right to the city and PAR within a doctoral research project. However, this thesis has also attempted to demonstrate how important dimensions of the fieldwork might be reconciled with the idea of the right to the city.

In Chapter 4 I argued that collectively-constructed narratives in and around the gardens were an important part of the social production of the gardens. Fenster (2005) has argued that the right to the city is constructed through and contained within men and women's narratives of everyday life in the city. Schmelzkopf (2002) meanwhile argued that conflict over urban public space in New York manifested in narratives regarding urban gardens. However there has not been an attempt within the urban agriculture discourse to critically unpack the ways that the process of narrative creation relates to the production of gardens. As described in Chapter 4, this relationship is dialectical and co-constitutive; the production of community spaces cannot be separated from the narratives which justify, guide and position the community with regards to other narratives and processes.

Furthermore, there has not been a scholarly attempt to reconcile the process of community narrative-building with the right to the city. This thesis has shown that the collective (re)interpretation of historical and contemporary events is critical for the production and continued existence of the urban gardens, both in Huerto del Rey Moro and Miraflores Sur, not only contributing to the social production of space, but also the emergence of a self-managing urban project.

Moreover, this thesis has argued that the production and communication of narratives is a central component of the self-organisation and self-management practices that characterise the gardens. The issue of communication is the second main contribution of this thesis to the idea of the right to the city. The inter-personal, direct, tacit, planned and unplanned forms of communication in and around the gardens are critical for processes of self-organisation and *autogestion*. This thesis has argued that in order to understand how the idea of *autogestion* might be made actionable and realised, it is critical that right to the city scholars engage with the dynamics, processes, and politics of communication.

Manuel Castells has problematised communication in the context of public politics. However this thesis has argued that Habermas' Theory of Communicative Action offers a more grounded lens through which to approach the complexities of communication in and around the urban gardens. There also exists a wide range of academic and grey literature that emphasises the more formal communication processes that characterise urban agriculture projects, and particularly the role of technology and the internet in helping urban food producers to share knowledge and resources within and between cities (see, for example Roth et al., 2015). However, there is little research that considers the social and political implications of these modes of communication. This thesis has attempted to show that the

forms, functions, and potentials of urban community gardens are inextricably tied to their communication dynamics. This is an important area for further research, discussed below.

Policy Implications

Given the specificity of urban community gardens in Seville, it would not be useful at this point to draw out specific policy lessons for local governments elsewhere looking to support urban agriculture initiatives. The diverse experiences outlined in this research are testament to the fact there is no concise list of policies that can support the diversity of initiatives emerging in the city. There already exists a large body of literature that considers the role of public policy in supporting urban agriculture towards social and environmental outcomes. The aim of this section is to consider more broadly the ways in which self-organised urban gardening groups are implicitly challenging the centrality of the City Hall, and thus also urban policy, as a tool for the production and management of cities. The challenge of groups like La Boldina is not to decide *which* policy can support self-managed urban agriculture, but *whether* urban policy is capable of responding to it.

In the context of Seville, this thesis agrees with the argument made by Celatta and Coletti (2017), that the relationship between urban agriculture and public policy is inherently problematic and risks "exacerbating existing distinctions between those who interpret urban gardening as a form of collaborative governance and those who see it as an instrument to re-claim the right to the city from the existing socio-political regime" (Ibid: 2). The contribution of this research is to show that community-managed initiatives are thriving outside of local government oversight, and in fact, the variable levels of support from the City Hall have actually had a negative impact on the gardens at Miraflores Sur. This experience suggests that consistency of engagement is more important than the precise form of support from the City Hall. Seville's City Hall has shown a renewed interest in urban community gardens, demonstrated by their urban agriculture strategy and scoping research. However, organisations such as La Boldina are not in a form that can be included in the current thinking of local policy-makers.

As this thesis has detailed, La Boldina are a growing organisation that is currently working in sites across Seville as well as outside of the city. They operate on institutionally managed land as well as occupied sites. This immediately puts them in conflict with the City Hall. Amongst the *Sevillanos* encountered through this research process, there appears to be a tacit acceptance of squatting. In the UK the issue of squatting land or property has been highly politicised, whereas in Seville, by contrast the narrative appears to be more pragmatic. Nevertheless, it is widely understood, particularly amongst squatters in Seville, that there is zero tolerance for occupation in City Hall and in the police. People squatting land and disused buildings live in constant fear of eviction, aware of the violent eviction of squatting groups in

the area over the past ten years. Huerto del Rey Moro is an interesting exception in this regard.

As discussed in Chapter 4, the garden is technically occupied, however there appears to be a degree of acceptance of the project by the local government; the garden is a highly visible occupation but does not appear to be under direct threat of eviction. However, the gardeners have no sense of security; there is no tenure agreement protecting the project. This feeling of precariousness has led to a reluctance to engage in any capacity with the City Hall. This is especially true of those gardeners that occupy properties, but it is also true of the vast majority of gardeners in Huerto del Rey Moro and La Boldina.

The result is that La Boldina are in many ways diverging from prevailing conceptions of urban development and urban management, by creating their own decision-making processes that operate outside of representative democratic oversight. Fundamentally this is a challenge to the idea of local government as the primary agent of change in urban contexts. La Boldina are the radical edge of a form of self-organisation and self-management that exists, in varying degrees, throughout Seville's urban communities; from the collective self-management of artist and artisan communities in Macarena, to relatively apolitical but nevertheless, self-managing communities of retired gardeners in Miraflores.

This is not to attribute fault to either the City Hall or La Boldina for their divergent visions of urban management; La Boldina has emerged in response to the same structural, social, cultural conditions that created Seville's City Hall. However, it is important to recognise the current incompatibility of their philosophies, priorities and practices. Seville's City Hall is taking a renewed interest in urban agriculture, but it remains to be seen whether they will recognise activities and communities that are working beyond hobby-gardening.

So, what can the City Hall do to engage these mobile and dynamic urban networks, given the degree of distrust amongst the gardeners about engaging with local government in any capacity? There are two ways to address this question. The first is to consider the ways in which urban policy might better incorporate the democratic and participatory ethos of Huerto del Rey Moro and la Boldina into its governance structure. The other is to question whether there can be any combination of policies that could meaningfully support the work of self-organised urban communities, whilst protecting their autonomy.

Around the world there have been countless, well-documented urban policy innovations that have successfully made urban governance more transparent, more accessible and more democratic. For example, in 2007-08, Seville embarked on a process participatory budgeting that enabled urban citizens to vote on how a significant proportion of the urban budget was allocated. While a process of participatory budgeting is unlikely to attract the full attention of groups like La Boldina, they would certainly engage in a democratic process of urban visioning with diverse groups across the City. This is a form of participation and action that is

central to the work of La Boldina; their works are not a reaction to disenfranchisement, and they should not be appealed to through promise of enhanced franchise, such as participatory budgeting. Rather, they are motivated by the alienation of the modern city, from the natural environment, and from other urban inhabitants. The way for the City Hall to engage with them to a greater and more meaningful extent is to rethink the ways that urban policy-making can empower or disempower urban inhabitants, beyond the narrow political discourses afforded by representative democracy, service provision, and public-private partnerships.

Another option that would very likely have a profoundly positive impact on the urban community gardens is greater consistency both in terms of their engagement with City Hall, and the long-term allocation of funds. Projects like Miraflores Sur have been severely impacted by the changes in funding and changes in the relationship with City Hall. When a project comes to rely on institutional support, it is disproportionately affected when that support is withdrawn. The case of Miraflores Sur shows that consistency of support is more critical than quantity of support.

In conclusion, the urban gardens of Seville would benefit from more substantial, more consistent support from the City Hall, particularly as it relates to security of tenure. However the more important policy implications of this research are in recognising that there are visions and forms of urban management emerging in Seville that contrast significantly with the vision of the City Hall. The challenge for the City Hall is how to harness and support groups like La Boldina in ways that preserve their autonomy, avoid conflict, and enable their energy to be a force for positive change in the wider city.

Areas for Further Research

In this final section of the Chapter, I reflect on what I believe to be important areas for future research comprising questions that this research process was not able to address, and questions that this research raises. Some of these questions relate specifically to the Sevillian context, others are broader issues for academic research.

In Chapter 4 I explored the role of narratives in the production of urban gardens. However, I was unable to unpack the extent to which the gardens were impacted by other narratives that did not exist so prominently within the community of gardeners. How, for example, are the gardens understood and valued by urban policy-makers, and local residents that live in close proximity to, and yet do not engage, in the gardens? In answering these questions it would become possible to address more substantial questions that relate to the significance of the urban gardens. To what extent, for example, can the narratives created in urban community gardens challenge dominant narratives regarding food systems and urban space? To what extent do the narratives within urban gardens enable or constrain solidarity with rural social movements, in Spain and beyond? One of the most obvious potential areas for theoretical

overlap in this regard, as well as solidarity on the ground, is between the right to the city and the food sovereignty movement. Further research is required both conceptually and practically to understand the opportunities and limitations of combining the struggles of food sovereignty and the right to the city.

In Chapter 5 I explored the socio-political potentials of urban community gardens and outlined the challenges that constrain these potentials. However, further research is required to establish the ways that these socio-political benefits are spatialised within the city: how does involvement in urban gardening projects impact on other areas of the gardeners' lives through time? More importantly still, further research is required to understand how the social and political outcomes relate to other beneficial impacts associated with urban community gardening: do the social and political impacts identified in Seville enable or constrain the capacity of the gardens to promote biodiversity, contribute to household food security, create urban livelihoods, or other beneficial outcomes associated with urban agriculture? Further research is also required to understand how different conflicts within the gardens, and between gardeners and local authorities influence the specific set of social and political impacts of the gardens.

Further research is also required to understand the potential relationships of urban agriculture and urban community gardens in one city, to other cities in different parts of the same country, as well as in different regions. David Harvey framed the urban as a global category, not reducible to any one city or nation. The challenge for further research is to trace the connections between projects between cities. To this end, participatory video-making is a particularly promising methodology that enables urban gardeners to represent and communicate their projects to other groups, in other countries, on their own terms.

In Chapter 6 I explored the dynamics of self-organisation and self-management. As outlined in Chapter 2 of this thesis, there are several distinct approaches to characterising self-management that this research project was not able to utilise, including Actor-Network Theory, Assemblage Theory, Complexity Theory. Further research is required to reconcile these approaches to characterising self-organisation with Lefebvre's concept of the right to the city. In particular, I feel that important further research is required to develop the right to the city framework to better account for the intersecting identities and motivations of urban inhabitants to participate in a community self-managed project, as well as the role of communication in variously enabling and constraining these processes. This thesis drew on the work of Habermas to discuss the issue of communication in relation to self-organisation in the gardens. But further critical scholarship is required to understand the opportunities and limitations of this approach.

Chapter 7 raises perhaps the most significant areas for further research. Drawing on both the right to the city and urban political ecology I demonstrated the diverse learning pathways that were emerging in the urban permaculture collective, La Boldina. But important questions

remain. How, for example, do the political orientations of members of La Boldina influence their modes of learning and the networks they are developing in the city? How far, and in what ways, can La Boldina's approach to urban agriculture engage with urban inhabitants with no existing interest in issues of urban sustainability or permaculture? But more importantly, to what extent can the assemblage of pedagogies identified within and around the urban gardens contests prevailing conceptions of the natural and built environments? Practically also, further systematic research is required to understand the relationships between the urban and rural pedagogies in relation to food politics. What knowledges and approaches might be shared, for example, between La Boldina and Via Campesina?

Finally, I hope that this research has demonstrated the validity of bringing together abstract theorisations of urbanisation and urban space with a Participatory Action Research approach. There are numerous issues here for further research with potentially profound implications for both academic literature on the right to the city and urban political ecology, as well as the practice of PAR. What PAR approaches are better suited to engaging with armchair theory? To what extent can PAR address the chasm between the way that the right to the city is described by Lefebvre and the actions of social movements such as those involved in the Global Platform on the Right to the City? And lastly, how can a right to the city and urban political ecology lens enable PAR practitioners to better understand and reflect upon the ways that our practices are embedded in global, regional and local socio-ecological, political and economic processes?

This thesis has demonstrated that the right to the city offers a rich lens for understanding the social and political potentials of urban community gardens and the practice of urban agriculture. I hope that further research can be conducted that recognises the limitations of this lens beyond the ways that I have been able to achieve in this thesis. As I have argued, the significance of *communication* and *narrative* are not adequately accounted in current conceptions of the right to the city. Further research is necessary to reconcile these important themes. My hope is that this further research will bring together both armchair academics and PAR practitioners, from inside and outside of the higher education institutions.

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